



UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

**INVENTORY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF MUTEGO
DISTRIBUTORS LTD, UGANDA**

RUTH KALIGIRWA

15/00/MBA/KLA/WKD/0114

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE

IN PARTIAL FUFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE

OF MASTER'S IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION OF

UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

JANUARY 2018

DECLARATION

I, **Ruth Kaligirwa** hereby declare that this dissertation titled “Inventory Management Practices and Performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd” is my own original work and has never been presented for any award of degree in any other institution of higher learning.

Signature.....

Date.....

RUTH KALIGIRWA

15/00/MBA/KLA/WKD/0114

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation has been written by Kaligirwa Ruth and is now ready to be submitted in for examination with my approval as the Institute's Supervisor.

.....

Dr. Godfrey Mugurusi

Date.....

.....

Mr. Alex Nduhura

Date.....

DEDICATION

Sincerely, I dedicate this work to my parents, for the absolute support in terms of tuition payment and for the moral support. They have worked tirelessly to bring me up, care for me since my early stage and made me a responsible person in all the places I have ever been to. I will always love you my dear parents and may the good lord bless you abundantly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank God the almighty for the strength, knowledge and good health throughout my studies. In the same way I honorably thank my University Supervisors Dr. Godfrey Mugurusi and Mr. Alex Nduhura for his intellectual support and valuable time they spared to guide me during the compilation of this dissertation. May the good lord bless you.

I also acknowledge the tireless efforts of my parents for laying a foundation in my academic endeavors.

Sincerely I would like to thank my course mates notably Mbabazi Barbra and Moses Kangume for your encouragement towards my struggle for success cannot be underestimated.

I cannot forget the motivational support of Mrs. Betty Kibuule and the rest. Your endurance to be my stepping stone to the highest mountain of success cannot be under looked towards this noble cause.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to establish the relationship between inventory management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd. The objectives of the study were: to examine the relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd, to establish relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd and to examine the relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.

The study used a cross sectional survey research design on a population which entailed the employees in different departments like administration, Stores, Operations/Production departments and others. A total of 86 respondents were selected for the study on 76 responded making the research valid. The researcher used both purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques in selecting the samples. The study was guided by a quantitative paradigm, but with substantial complementary qualitative methods. Questionnaires were self-administered which provided sufficient data from the sample selected, and interviews were used in order to get detailed data to complement and triangulate data which was collected using questionnaires. Data from the questionnaires was analyzed quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) where correlation was used to establish the relationship between inventory management practices and performance. Data from questionnaires was presented in form of frequency tables and bar graphs.

The study findings confirmed that storage management practices have a significant positive influence on performance of an organization ($r=0.185$), material handling practices and organizational performance have no significant relationship ($r = 0.038$) and lead-time management practices have no significant influence on performance of organizations ($r=-0.163$).

The study recommends that organizations should adopt proactive attitudes towards the issue of proper inventory management practices. Being proactive requires maintenance of the right level of inventory at any point in time. The organizations should avoid the dangers that are inherent in keeping too little or too much of stock.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.1.1 Historical background	1
1.1.2 Theoretical background.....	3
1.1.3 Conceptual Background.....	5
1.1.4 Contextual background	7
1.2 Statement of the problem	8
1.3 General objective	9
1.4 Specific objectives	9
1.5 Research Questions	9
1.6 Hypothesis of the study	10
1.7 Conceptual Framework	10
1.8 Significance of the study	11
1.9 Justification of the study	11
1.10 Scope of the Study	12
1.10.1 Geographical scope	12
1.10.2 Content scope	12
1.10.3 Time scope	12
1.11 Operational Definitions of key terms and concepts	12

CHAPTER TWO:LITERATUREREVIEW.....	14
2.0 Introduction.....	14
2.1 Theoretical review.....	14
2.1.1 Resource-Based View Theory	14
2.2 Review of Related Literature	17
2.2.1 Storage management practices and organizational performance	17
2.3 Materials handling practices and organizational performance.....	19
2.4 Lead time management practices and organizational performance	21
2.5 Summary of Literature Review	22
CHAPTER THREE:METHODOLOGY	22
3.0 Introduction	22
3.1 Research Design.....	22
3.2 The Study Population.....	23
3.3 Sample Techniques and Sampling Size	23
3.3.1 Sample selection	23
3.3.2 Sample size	24
3.4 Data Collection Methods	25
3.4.1 Quantitative data collection methods.....	25
3.4.2 Qualitative data collection methods.....	25
3.5 Data Collection Instruments.....	26
3.5.1 Interview guide	26
3.5.2 Self-administered Questionnaires	26
3.6 Procedure for Data Collection.....	26
3.6.1Data Processing and analysis	26
3.7 Data quality control.....	26
3.7.1 Validity.....	27
3.7.2 Reliability.....	27
3.8 Ethical Consideration.....	29
CHAPTER FOUR:PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS	29

4.0 Introduction	29
4.1 Response Rate	30
4.2 Background Information of the Respondents.....	30
4.2.1 Gender of the respondents.....	30
4.2.2 Age bracket of the respondents	31
4.2.3 Education background of the respondents	32
4.2.4 Period spent working at the Organization by the respondents	33
4.2.5 Department of the respondents	34
4.3 Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	35
4.3.1 Relationship between Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	40
4.4 The relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd	41
4.4.1 Testing the relationship between material handling practices and organizational performance	47
4.5 The relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	48
4.5.1 Testing the relationship between lead-time management and organizational performance	53
4.6 Organizational performance.....	54
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION , CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
5.0 Introduction	57
5.1 Summary of Findings.....	58
5.1.1 The relationship between Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	58
5.1.2 Relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	59
5.1.3 The relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	59
5.2 Discussion of Findings.....	60

5.2.1 The relationship between Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	60
5.2.2 Relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	61
5.2.3 The relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	63
5.3 Conclusion	64
5.3.1 The relationship between Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	64
5.3.2 Relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	65
5.3.3 The relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	65
5.4 Recommendations.....	65
5.4.1 The relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	65
5.4.2 The relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	66
5.4.3 The relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.....	66
5.5 Limitations of the study	66
5.6 Contributions of the study.....	67
5.7 Areas for Further Research	67
REFERENCES	68
APPENDICES	75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Category of Sample size	24
Table 2: Determination of validity of instruments	27
Table 3: Valid results	28
Table 4: Gender of the respondents	30
Table 5: Marital status	31
Table 6: Education level	32
Table 7: Department of the respondents	34
Table 8: Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd	36
Table 9: Relationship between store management practices and organizational performance	40
Table 10: Relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd	42
Table 11: Relationship between material handling and organizational performance	47
Table 12: Relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd	48
Table 13: Relationship between leadtime management and organizational performance	53
Table 14: Performance of Mutego distributors	54

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual framework	10
Figure 2: Age bracket of the respondents	31
Figure 3: Period spent working at Mutego distributors Ltd.....	33

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study assesses the impact of inventory management practices on performance of Mutego distributors. It considered performance as the dependent variable (DV) and inventory management practices as the independent variable (IV). This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, and purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, hypothesis, and scope of the study, conceptual framework as well as the operational definitions.

1.1 Background of the study

The background of this study was presented as a historical background, theoretical background conceptual background and the contextual background for inventory management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.

1.1.1 Historical background

Since the mid-1980s the strategic benefits of inventory management and production planning and scheduling have become obvious. The business press has highlighted the success of Japanese, European, North American firms in achieving unparalleled effectiveness and efficiency in manufacturing and distribution. In recent years, many of the firms have 'raised the bar', yet again by coordinating with other firms in their supply chains. For instance, instead of responding to unknown and variable demand, they share information so that the variability of the demand they observe is significantly lower (Silver et al 1998).

Brooks and Wilson (2015) notes that manufacturing is becoming more and more competitive every day. Gaither and Frazier (2013) stated that "a country's borders no longer provide protection from foreign imports. Competition has become intense and is increasing". For years, large and small manufacturing companies have been searching for ways to stay ahead of their competitors. Organizations can improve their competitiveness through gaining an understanding of their inventory levels and implementing processes to reduce these levels (Brooks and Wilson, 2015). Companies must strive to reduce inventory levels. By reducing inventory levels, businesses will experience benefits that show up directly on the bottom line. In many manufacturing firms, fewer inventories equate to less money tied up and can enable funds to be allocated to other improvement like customer satisfaction. It is expected that a

company that implements good inventory management and cycle counting practices will report significant increases in inventory accuracy, which in turn lead to reduced inventory levels and improved on-time delivery to customers.

Globally, traditional supply chains consist of manufacturers, who process, assemble and sell products to customers. Once the product has been sold, the ownership of the product is transferred on to the customer to satisfy the customer needs (Greene, 2010). Typically after a possible warranty period, the repair, maintenance and eventual disposal of the product is then the responsibility of the customer. The reverse processing activities of inspection, parts remanufacturing, and materials recycling can substantially reduce the material and energy consumed by producing goods. Although these activities have a beneficial environmental impact, customers fail to participate in the remanufacturing efforts by producers or third parties because they often lack incentives hence this reduces customer satisfaction (Hulburt, 2003). Remanufacturing has received tremendous attention from companies over the last few decades. Although one side of the coin is to extend the life of used products and achieve a sustainable environment, there is an economic aspect to it that is attractive. A lot of companies seem to be making huge profits in the remanufacturing business today (Iglehart, 2013). But, one thing that drew so much attention to remanufacturing in the past few decades is the quality of the final product. Some time back in the 1950s in USA, the manufacturing firms were faced with maintaining good inventory management practices and so this had an effect on customer satisfaction.

Many companies in Uganda that adopt remanufacturing rely on return of used products from the customers to process them to 'as good as new' condition. Providing product-based services, termed as servicizing, is a strategy in which the producers provide the use and maintenance of products while retaining ownership and the prospective customers, or clients, pay the money to receive the services of products (Kabahubya, 2014). This strategy minimizes repeatedly buying and disposing of the products. Providing product-based services requires the producer to extend its responsibility for the product both during and after the use phase.

In Uganda, inventory management has enabled firms to have adequate quantities of high quality items available to serve customer needs, while also minimize the costs of carrying inventory (Brigham & Ehrhard, 2005). However, managing these inventories in order to achieve their objectives has posed a great challenge to the firms. Many firms have not yet

established how much to invest in inventories and the right inventory levels to hold so as satisfy customers. Too much inventory consumes physical space, creates a financial burden, and increases the possibility of damage, spoilage and loss. On the other hand, too little inventory often disrupts manufacturing operations, and increases the likelihood of poor customer service. In many cases good customers may become irate and take their business elsewhere if the desired product is not immediately available. Effort must be made by management to decide on the optimum investment in inventory since it costs more money to tie down capital in excess inventory (Lysons et al 2006).

In Mutego distributors, distribution of products is characterized by elongated or overextended chains of retailers which, in turn, mean long chains of transactions between chain members and consumers (Mutego end of year report, 2012). Wilberforce (2007) showed that leading distribution companies in Uganda are faced with problems of wrong forecasting due to lack of enough inventory management information. This caused erratic deliveries in the company, late deliveries and inflexibility hence affecting performance. Unavailability of integrated inventory management has affected productivity at distribution companies leading to reduced profits. To sustain growth and increase the contribution of these companies to GDP, companies should boost their level of productivity to help the sector regain its competitiveness by managing the flow of stock.

1.1.2 Theoretical background

Different theories have been employed to help bring clarity to the study of the effects of inventory management practices on performance of organizations. This study borrows from the theory of constraints and lean theory to build the critical concerns on effects of inventory management practices on performance.

1.1.2.1 Resource Based View Theory

Resource based view was a theory put forward by Barney's 1991 article "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage," which became widely cited as a pivotal work in the emergence of the resource-based view elaborating that the source of an organization's competitive advantage lies mainly in how it exploits its distinctive internal resources and competencies, by setting strategic objectives based on what they enable it to do (David, 2011). The resource-based approach starts with the organization's strengths and seeks an environment that will enable it exploit them by changing environments to suit what it does best rather than changing what it does best to fit the environment (Kuncoro, 2005). One of the key insights of

the resource-based view is that not all organizational resources are a potential source of competitive advantage (Hitt, 2011).

However, in order to be competitive, resources must be valuable by being capable of creating customer value through: allowing the firms to implement strategies that will enable it to meet customer's needs more efficiently and effectively, rare and in high demand, difficult for competitors to imitate and difficult to substitute (Sampurno, 2010)

In strategic inventory management, Sulastri (2006) found that RBV approach is useful by employing various strategies in controlling inventories in the organization through optimal utilization and allocation to be more competitive and improve on performance. RBV also uses techniques such as value analysis to study the function of material, components or systems to identify areas of unnecessary costs as it forms a key component of an inventory control strategy that minimizes costs to the bottom-line (Husnah, 2013). RBV thus ensures product quality is guaranteed which in turn meets customer's needs and specifications through fulfillment of orders (Wadhwa, 2010). In order to achieve this, RBV exploits supplier-led approach through creating a challenge for firms down the value chain to learn how to exploit the new machinery, consumables or processes, scale-intensive approach through use of ICT application where advantage is gained from economies of scale and information intensive approach by exploiting information technology which in turn influences performance among manufacturing firms (Denson, 2008)

The resource based view of the firm further suggests that an organization's human capital management practices can contribute significantly to sustaining competitive advantage by creating specific knowledge, skills and culture within the firm that are difficult to imitate (Mata et al., 1995). In other words, by creating resource diversity (increasing knowledge and skills) and/or resource immobility (a culture that people want to work in), sustainable competitive advantage can be created and maintained.

In order to create human capital resource diversity and immobility, an organization must have adequate human capital management practices, organizational processes, knowledge management practices and systems, educational opportunity (both formal and informal) and social interaction (i.e., community building) practices in place thus rendering it an important theory for this study (Schafer, 2004). Thus the resources of the study being human capital, raw materials and distribution chain in Mutego distributors.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

The essence of inventory management is to augment business operations so as to ensure effective flow of goods, products, and services (Chalotra, 2013). In this context, 'inventory' is the aggregate list of items; a quantity of goods in stock or stock of the product which an organization is producing for sale and the components that make the sale. 'Stock' consists of a wide range of goods or materials stationery, office equipment, plant, machinery, consumables, etc. available for use or sale. The element of 'management' or 'control' is thought to be pivotal in this context because any 'control' is deemed a process by which events are made to conform to a set plan. The term 'control' has familiar synonyms such as management, overseeing, administering, conducting, planning, superintending, guiding, organizing, supervising, regulating, supervising, all performed so as to prevent "helplessness", "neglect", "weakness", or "mismanagement" in the system (Yusuf, 2003) Thus, inventory management is the supervision of supply, storage and accessibility of items in order to ensure an adequate supply without excessive oversupply. Stock Management is often associated with understanding the inventory mix of an organization and the different levels of demand on that inventory, depending on diverse external and internal factors that can exert demand for materials in a given period (Adebayo et al, 2012).

Inventories normally appear on a company's balance sheet as an asset. Inventory turnover, which indicates the rate at which goods are converted into cash, is a key factor in appraising a firm's financial condition. Fluctuation in the ratio of inventory to sales is known as inventory investment or disinvestment. The monetary value of the inventory also appears on the income statement in determining the cost of the goods sold. The cost of goods sold is determined by adding the inventory on hand at the beginning of the period to the cost of purchasing and producing goods/services during the period and subtracting from this total the inventory on hand at the end of the period. In many organizations' financial statements, inventories are usually priced at cost or at market value, whichever is lower. The purchase costs of the materials usually fluctuate during the year which makes it necessary to determine which cost-flow assumption is to be used for inventory management purposes.

Grönroos (2001) emphasized the importance of lead time in the experience of inventory management, similar to the idea proposed by Lehtinen and Lehtinen (2002). Customers bring their earlier experiences and overall perceptions of a service firm to each encounter because

customers often have continuous contacts with the same service firm (Grönroos, 2001). Therefore, the lead time issue was introduced as yet another important component in the perceived quality inventory management model, so that the dynamic aspect of the service perception process was considered as well. A favorable and well-known time strategy is an asset for any firm because it has an impact on customer perceptions of the communication and operations of the firm in many respects. If a service provider has a strong inventory management in the minds of customers, minor mistakes was forgiven. If mistakes often occur, however, the image was damaged. If a provider's image is negative, the impact of any mistake will often be magnified in the consumer's mind. In a word, lead-time can be viewed as a filter in terms of a consumer's perception of quality Parasuraman et al. (2005). Lead-time has to live up to service promises, especially if the service provider is “claiming” the quality service position in the firming industry.

Performance has been defined as an organization’s ability to earn revenues in excess of expenses over a period. Pandey (2007) noted that, **a company should earn profits to survive and grow over a long period**. Firms must earn profits to maximize their shareholders wealth, to generate income for expansion and to finance their daily operations (Pandey, 2008).

Performance entails profitability which can be defined as a company’s ability, to generate revenue in excess of the cost in producing those revenues or is a measure of business success through comparing profits made with amount sold or invested (Hanson 2002). Poor profitability of small-scale enterprises can be attributed to inventory problems, which is caused by inadequate or poor management. Poor performance has also been attributed to general lack of inventory ethics (Michael 2008).

Organizations which do not have performance means in their processes, procedures, and plans experience lower performance and higher customer dissatisfaction and employee turnover (Andersen and Christensen, 2005). Measuring the performance of the purchasing function yields benefits to organizations such as cost reduction, enhanced profitability, assured supplies, quality improvements and competitive advantage as noted by (Basheka & Bisangabasaija, 2010).

Although the need for performance in firms has long been recognized, for a variety of reasons, many organizations fail to measure it adequately (Cagliano et al, 2003). A general weakness of “traditional” measures is that they recognize and reward mainly short-term gains, rather than long-term ones. Donovan et al (2003) argued that measuring long-term impact is notoriously

difficult. In another study, Zineldin (1995) described and empirically analyzed the major factors influencing the relationship between firms and their corporate customers in Sweden. Zineldin's study was based on 179 responses from small, medium, and large firms. Significant findings include the following. First, small and medium-sized firms have more stable relationships and contact with their firms than do larger firms. They also have relationships with fewer firms. Second, small firms are less satisfied with their relationship with their firms due to a lack of confidence and cooperation. In addition, small firms feel their Companies are less knowledgeable of their business. Third, the most important factors in the selection of a lead firm are confidence and trust, competitiveness on loans, and adaptations and speed of decisions. Personal contact with the firm and the level of firm technology, while important, are not sufficient reasons for choosing a firming partner.

1.1.4 Contextual background

According to Waters (2008), organizations have dramatically changed their views of stock in the recent years. Historically, they saw stock as a benefit, with high stocks ensuring maximum service and even giving a measure of wealth. This thinking encouraged organizations to maximize their stocks and is still the reason why countries keep reserves of gold and why individuals keep food in the freezer. But with the advent of the twentieth century, it became clear that these stocks had costs that could be surprisingly high. Then organizations began to view stocks not as unreserved benefits but as a resource that needs careful control and thus the need to device ways of minimizing overall costs.

According to Nalubwama (2006), Mutego distributor is located in Mbarara District. It is one of the distribution points of Crown Beverages Ltd. Crown Beverages Limited (CBL), a leading soft drinks bottler in Uganda, has reduced its retail price for the 330ml pack size by Shs200 from Shs 1,200 to Shs1, 000, in an effort to make their products more affordable for their customers. The study select Mutego distributors as many of the business enterprise owners manage their inventories and the researcher was not aware of the contributions of such inventory management methods applied.

More recently, Mutego distributors has gone further in reducing stocks, and they try to work with very low levels. There has been a trend towards operations that move materials quickly and efficiently through supply chains matching supply to demand so that stocks are not accumulated (Nalubwama 2006). When this works, it gives considerable savings, but it is not

a realistic option for all operations. Mutego distributors cannot work properly without stock and therefore they have to consider its management.

In Uganda, while some companies have adopted the modern inventory management techniques, most of the firms are still lagging behind relying on the traditional methods despite the many benefits that are generated from the use of modern inventory management techniques (Mugenda et al 2003).

It is therefore important for companies in Uganda to have sound, effective and well-coordinated inventory management systems because the business environment is rapidly changing, highly competitive and this drastically affects the performance of the organization. With the application of proper inventory management techniques, the right materials were available at the right time, with the minimum storage costs and investment.

However, Mutego distributor faces a challenge of overextended chains of retailers which, in turn, mean long chains of transactions between chain members and consumers, wrong forecasting due to lack of enough inventory management information which has led to late deliveries and inflexibility hence affecting performance (Mutego end of year report, 2012).

It is against this background that the researcher sought to critically assess the impact of inventory management practices on organizational performance with reference Mutego distributors in Uganda.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Globally, inventory constitutes the most significant part of current assets in any organization and because of the relative largeness of inventories managed by most organizations; a considerable sum of an organization's fund is being committed to them. According to Dimitrios, (2008) inventory management practices with particular interest in storage practices, material handling and lead time management have come to be recognized as a vital problem area needing top priority if an organization needs to meet its performance target.

Inventory management practices hence deserve paramount consideration since in most organizations, direct materials represent up to 50% of the total product cost, as a result of the money entrusted on inventory, thereby affecting the profitability of the organization.

However, organizations have ignored the potential savings from proper inventory management like Material control system, economic order quantity, packaging, queue control, in process

handling to mention but a few, treating inventory as a necessary evil and not as an asset requiring management (Sander et al 2010).

Today distribution companies find themselves operating in a turbulent and changing environment thus the need to use new strategies to overcome the new threats in terms of competition on its customer base and assault on its bottom line. In order to fight off the competition the Company strengthens its competitive position by investing in inventory function. It thus becomes absolutely imperative to manage inventories effectively so as to avoid unnecessary cost and ensure stimulation of performance in terms of profitability, sales maximization and customer satisfaction. For Mutego distributor Limited to enhance its competitiveness it needs to embrace the changing competitive trends in the market by improving the inventory management practices. The study was therefore set to investigate the relationship between inventory management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Limited.

1.3 General objective

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between inventory management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.

1.4 Specific objectives

- a. To examine the relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd
- b. To establish relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd
- c. To examine the relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

1.5 Research Questions

- a. What is the relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd?
- b. What is relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd?
- c. What is the relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd?

1.6 Hypothesis of the study

- i. There is a relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.
- ii. There is a significant relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.
- iii. There is a significant relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

In the study the inventory management practices was taken as independent variable while performance was taken as dependent variable. Performance was measured in terms of sales growth, profitability and customer satisfaction.

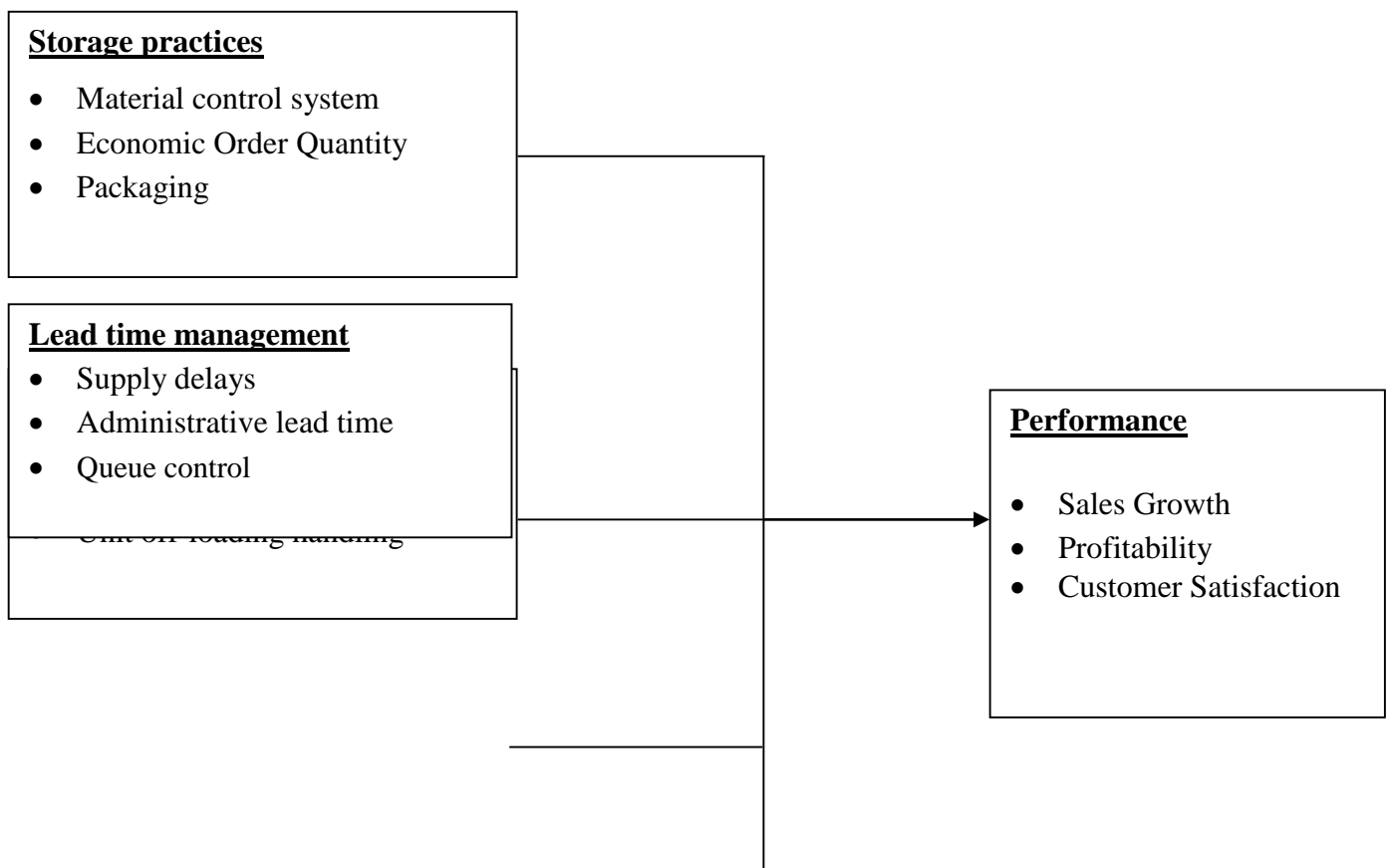
Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Independent variable

(Inventory management practices)

Dependent variable

(Performance)



Source: Adapted from Salaman (1995) and modified by the researcher

1.8 Significance of the study

The question of inventory management and common exposures are clearly of enormous importance for regulators, industry participants and investors. The results of this research could have implications and importance to various stakeholders as follows:

The study could help the organization because it highlights inventory management methods that need major emphasis as regarding performance of an organization

To investors, this study might help them to understand the factors that influence the returns on their investments.

To various organizations, this report might provide an insight into the inventory management attributes which may need to be incorporated in their invest

The study may also provide a contemporary cornerstone for implementation of more inventory management practices for improved organizational performance.

1.9 Justification of the study

It is evident that management of inventory has become a common practice among large firms worldwide and this is due to the various benefits that accrue to a firm as a result of managing its inventories. Firms manage inventory *to determine and maintain an optimum level investment in inventory in order to achieve required performance*. Firms have continuously managed their inventory in order to improve their performance and meet customer demand. *To meet customer demand, firms have to ensure that stock-outs are avoided without incurring high inventory costs*. However, the various studies covered have not extensively delved into *inventory management practices in relation to the performance of* distribution firms like Mutengo Distributors. As a result, this study seeks to explore inventory Management practices on the profitability of these organizations using a case study of Mutengo Distributors Ltd.

1.10 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study involved the geographical scope, content scope and time scope.

1.10.1 Geographical scope

The study was conducted in Mutego Distributors Ltd in Kampala, Uganda.

1.10.2 Content scope

The study was limited to the inventory management techniques commonly used Mutego Distributors Ltd, the relationship between inventory management practices and performance and the challenges faced by Mutego Distributors Ltd during inventory control. In the study the inventory management practices was taken as independent variable while performance was taken as dependent variable.

1.10.3 Time scope

The study considered a period of 2010 - 2015. It examined the factors correlated with, the inventory management techniques, the relationship between inventory management practices and performance and the challenges faced by organizations during inventory control including new data tools which are used in collection of data and reporting.

1.11 Operational Definitions of key terms and concepts

For purposes of this study, the concepts below are defined as assigned thereof not necessarily reflecting their ordinary or dictionary meanings. These are:

Inventory: is the amount of goods, materials or parts carried out in stock or store house for example, work in progress (W.I.P), raw materials, financial goods resale MRO items.

Inventory management according to Garry (1997) involves the planning, ordering and scheduling of the materials used in the manufacturing process. It exercises control over three types of inventories i.e. raw materials, work in progress, and finished goods. Purchasing is primary concerned with control over the raw materials inventory, which includes; raw materials or semi-processed materials, fabricated parts and maintenance, repair and operations items.

Inventory control: refers to the process whereby the investment in materials and parts carried in stock is required within pre-determined unit set in accordance with inventory policy

established by management. In this case Mutego Distributors Ltd controls its inventory through provision of safe ware houses.

A customer, also client, buyer or purchaser is the buyer or user of the paid products of an individual or organization, mostly called the supplier or seller. This is typically through purchasing or renting goods or services. It is also the person or group that is the direct beneficiary of a project or service. The customers of Mutego Distributors Ltd are residents of Mbarara and the neighbouring districts.

Profit generally is the making of gain in business activity for the benefit of the owners of the business. It is also defined as returns received on a business undertaking after all operating expenses have been met. Mutego Distributors Ltd makes its profits after deducting the expenses from the sales.

A technique refers to the ways which may be adopted in order to minimize on the uncertainties or outcomes of poor inventory levels like stockless purchasing system, determining order quantities and inventory levels.

Efficiency refers to a functioning or prospering of a company at a given time in a given period basing on the desired goals and objectives of a company. Mutego Distributors Ltd are efficient in records keeping which enhances their proper inventory management practices.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the scholarly material regarding the study. Theories regarding data quality were also reviewed and arranged according to the study objectives. The gaps identified in the literature review are also indicated. It is done mainly from the survey already conducted in the field of inventory management practices and performance in organizations. The sources of information will include the secondary data which includes data from the internet, library books, journals, reports and magazines on inventory management practices and performance.

2.1 Theoretical review

2.1.1 Resource-Based View Theory

The resource based view theory was mainly developed in the late 1980s and 90s by Barney, while later being adjusted with extensions (Barney 1991). With paying attention to the achievement of a competitive advantage through internal resources, the resource based view became one of the grand theories of economics. According to Barney (1991) “the resource based view examines the link between a firm’s internal characteristics and performance”. As the basis for a competitive advantage, the resource based view considers the application of a bundle of tangible and intangible resources (Wernerfelt, 1984). In order to make to competitive advantage sustainable, resources are required to be heterogeneous and immobile (Barney, 1991).

The Resource Based View (RBV) theory is one of the fundamental principles for the competitive advantage of a firm. The RBV of the firm posits that a firm's internal processes create a resource bundle which can become the means of creating and sustaining a competitive advantage (Bates & Flynn, 1995). The RBV literature considers a firm as a collection of heterogeneous resources, or factors of production or as bundles of resources including all inputs that allow a firm to operate and implement its strategies (Barney et. al., 1991). A company achieves a competitive advantage when it has key resources (these can be physical resources, human resources or organizational resources) that its competitors do not have (Barney, 1991). Developing and maintaining this competitive advantage depends on whether the firm is able to identify, develop, deploy, and protect the internal resources (Barney, 1991).

In the context of the resource-based view, a firm might lose its competitive advantage if important inventory management skills are scarce or are getting lost as they are not easily duplicated or substituted. Inventory management skills are valuable as they help providing supply strategies for future needs and developing supply management strategies to support company strategies (Carr & Pearson, 2002). As purchasing professionals interact with other functions within a complex social network, purchasing skills are difficult to replicate (Eltantawy, 2005).

The two assumptions for RBV theory are (1) resources and capabilities are heterogeneously distributed among firms; and (2) resources and capabilities are imperfectly mobile, which make firms' differences remain stable over time (Barney 1991). Every firm is different (heterogeneous) from other firms in terms of the resources and capabilities a firm possesses or accesses. These differences differentiate one firm from another and a firm's success is due to its firm-specific resources.

2.1.1.1 Types of resources in organizations

Broadly construed, resources are any assets that an organization might draw on to help it achieve its goals (Bryson et al. 2007). More specifically, “resources include all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge, etc. controlled by a firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness” (Barney 1991). Also, resources are the tangible and intangible assets firms use to develop and implement their strategies (Ray, et al 2004).

As mentioned above, there exist many kinds of resources in an organization. Scholars have offered a variety of classifications for resource types. Bozeman et al (1990) offer three types: personnel resources, financial resources, and organizational structure. Russo et al (1997) classify resources as physical assets and technologies, human resources and organizational capabilities, and the intangible resources of reputation and political acumen. According to Rainey and Steinbauer (1999), organizational resources are divided into financial, human, and technological resources. Hansen et al. (2004) classify an organization's resources into two broad concepts based on Penrose's (1959) argument: productive resources (which are needed for achieving goals) and administrative resources (which govern the use of productive resources). Fry et al (2004) divide resources into the people, physical materials, financial assets, and information.

In this study, I offer four types of organizational resources: administrative (structural) resources, human resources, physical resources, and reputation resources. Human resources, financial resources, and physical resources are traditional inputs in any organization. Administrative resources serve as leadership structures for governing and managing these traditional resources.. Reputation is also an important intangible resource. This classification is used to investigate the impacts of various resources on federal agencies' performance.

Administrative resources: By administrative resources, I include the top decision-making structure for the company because, as Bozeman and Straussman (1990) point out, organizational (leadership) structure is one type of organizational resources. According to Penrose (1959), the growth of a firm is limited by the bundle of productive resources controlled by a firm and by the administrative framework used to organize the use of these resources. Also, Hansen et al. (2004) argue that administrative resources govern productive resources which directly contribute to achieving organizational goals. In other words, administrative resources make decisions about selecting and deploying other resources. The value of administrative resources is reflected in the quality of administrative decisions which ultimately influence firm performance (Hansen et al. 2004). The top decision-making structure of an agency is often designed by Congress, but, once it is part of the agency, structure serves as an administrative resource governing productive resources.

Kor and Mahoney (2000) suggest focusing on the impact of the formation of the top-management team on firm performance in the Resource-Based View. Based on this idea, I focus on two aspects of the top decision-making structure of an agency: the number of members in the top decision-making structure, and the term length of these members. These two aspects play important roles in administrative decisions on selecting and deploying productive resources.

Human resources: According to the RBV, scarce, valuable, and imperfectly imitable resources create sustained performance differences by generating sustainable competitive advantages (Kraatz 2001). Scholars have studied the impact of the number of staff on agency performance or service performance for example Whetten (1978); Christensen et al (1980); Glisson et al 1980; Lan and Rainey 1992) and agreed that size does not seem to systematically cause organizational performance (Boyne 2003). While Blau (1970) points out that a large number of members can create coordination and communication problems that a small group does not have, other scholars argue that agencies with more employees have greater capabilities

to solve tasks because they can absorb or recall more information about tasks, more critical judgments available to correct errors, and more possible solution strategies (Harrison 1975). Those capabilities may help explain the higher-quality decisions sometimes reported in large groups thus enhanced capacities for problem-solving offer competitive advantages for an organization that lead to better performance (Cummings 1974). For this study, I expect a positive impact of the number of full-time employees on agency performance.

Physical resources: According to Barney (1991), physical resources include the physical technology used in an organization, an organization's equipment, its geographic location, and raw materials. In a similar way, Fry et al. (2004) argue that physical resources include fixed assets such as land, building, and equipment, raw materials that will be used in creating products, and general supplies used in the operation of the organization. While financial resources can be used flexibly to purchase equipment, pay workers, and buy advertising, physical resources are relatively inflexible in that they are more directly connected with the operation of an organization and the achievement of organizational goals than financial resources. In this study, I focus on the amount of general property, plant and equipment in total assets of an agency as a physical resource.

Reputation as a resource: Reputation has been introduced as an important intangible resource representing an overall assessment of an organization's operation and performance (Teece, et al 1997). According to Roberts et al (1997), reputation is an extremely important strategic asset and superior performers with favorable reputation are able to sustain superior outcomes for longer periods of time. Citizen opinions or evaluations of an agency's operation or performance are important and critical to that agency because reputational effects can be a powerful force for controlling behavior in a social system (Granovetter 1985). According to bureaucratic reputation theory, reputation is a strong incentive for bureaucratic agencies to be concerned with their maintenance in order to protect themselves against being distinguished as inferior agents (Krause et al 2005). In this vein, I expect that an agency's public reputation has a positive impact on agency performance

2.2 Review of Related Literature

2.2.1 Storage management practices and organizational performance

According to Goetschalck (2012), systems for storage can be engineered with other function so as to store materials that is to hold materials until they are needed. The materials come in different varieties from consumer products such as TVs in local distribution centers, in hospital

emergencies drug doses for battling a biological attack on a city etc. Storage systems are an essential component of every supply organization. The main functions of storage systems are to put materials into storage, then holding the materials in fixed position inside the storage system and finally remove materials from storage and are often called order picking.

According to Saleemi, (2001), a good storage system is one wherein the functions of stores department have been carefully planned and coordinated to achieve the objectives of storekeeping successfully. A storage system should aim at smooth functioning of the whole enterprise, perfect coordination between different functionaries in the department as well as between other department in the organization, avoidance of all types of delays, wastages and spoilage, reduction of operational cost at all levels including in time and effort in the accomplishment of a job and it should also aim in separating purchasing functions from the materials organization. It should be looked after by an independent executive separately responsible for his assignment and answerable to the chief executive.

According to Goetschalck (2012), the performance of storage systems depends on four internal characteristics and their interrelations; storage capacity or equivalent storage density, ease of access to storage locations, complexity of the internal structure and level of information technology. According to Corina (2011), the years eighties and nineties were marked by the fact that the identification of organizations objectives was more complex than initially considered, managers began to understand that an organization is successful if it accomplished its goals (effectiveness) using a minimum of resources (efficiency). In this context profit became one of the many indicators of performance.

It has been discovered that a closed storage system is best suited with high valued goods which prevent the regular loss of materials in many organizations. Therefore organizations dealing in high valued products should embrace this system of storage according to Vanik (2004). The store manager should issue the properties when requested to avoid duplication. In open storage system, the materials are kept in places which can be demanded for the same materials. In plants using the open storage system, no storeroom as such exists; each material is stored as close to its point of use as is physically possible.

According to Vanik (2004), materials are stored in bins, on shelves, racks on pickets and to the boxes. However the storage configuration of each work station is arranged to fit the available space storage facilities are completely free and a worker has access to any storage facility. The open system is designed to expedite production activities. It places little emphasis on the

physical security of materials in ideal applications, there is considerable justification for this approach because the material is used relatively quickly and it is not subject to a high rate of deterioration, obsolescence or theft. An automobile assembly plant offers the clearest example of an open storage system. The daily production is high and damaged parts and sub- assemblies turn into the plant in a steady stream. For higher cost bulky items, deliveries from supplies may be scheduled several times a day. As a result average inventory is extremely low relative to plant output; such systems plant usually exact demand for close cooperation on performance in production control, purchasing and the supplier and carrier organizations. Gupta (2003) realized that open system also places emphasis on conventional wheels. The tall mastered vehicles have a lifting platform with a shuttle that stores and retrieved palletized containerized loads on both sides of the aisle. These vehicles normally are controlled remotely by a computer although they can be controlled manually. Hence, this type of operation is simply an extension of the random access storage concept to include computer direction on mechanized vehicles used in actual storage and retrieval of materials.

Corina et al, (2011) says an automated storage system is able increase operating efficiency even more by linking the production planning computer system with the control computer system. In the case required production materials are automatically issued and mechanically 'pricked' from storage by computer command initiated by computer released production structure in the production planning department. This system utilized storehouse space exceptionally well, which is good news to any financial manager concerned about the cost of buildings and real estate and thus drastically reduce warehouse labor requirements and operating costs.

2.3 Materials handling practices and organizational performance

In the earlier years, materials handling was treated as a cost Centre since purchasing department was spending money on materials, while store was holding huge inventory of materials, blocking money and space (Ramakrishna, 2005). However, with the process of liberation and opening up of global economy, there has been a drastic change in the business environment, resulting in manufacturing organizations exposed to intense competition in marketplace. In Uganda for instance, materials constitute a major cost component for any industry. Bell et al (2007), states that the total cost of installed materials or value of materials may be 60% or more. In many cases, the cost of materials exceeds 50% of the total cost of goods produced.

Such a large investment requires considerable planning and control so as to minimize wastage which invariably affects the performance of the organization (Ramakrishna, 2005).

Majority of the companies attain significant savings from effective materials management, which amounts between 50%-60% of total costs (Song et al., 2006). Effective handling of materials can lead to a reduction in cost, resulting in a significant saving. A potential 6% saving on total cost through effective material management is achievable (Bell et al 1987). The various types of materials to be handled in any organization include purchased materials, work-in-progress (WIP), materials and finished goods (Banjoko, 2009). Ogbadu (2009), identified basic price, purchasing cost, marketing cost, obsolescence and wastages as the various costs involved in these materials. Thus, the handling of these materials so as to reduce the costs associated is what it is referred to as material handling. Previous researches carried out by Whyback et al (1986), Evan et al., (1987) and Ondiek, (2009) have shown that materials account for more than 50% percent of the annual turnover in firms. This shows clearly that priority should be given to handling of materials in organizations to avoid unnecessary costs.

Ugandan production and manufacturing firms, and specifically businesses in the dairy sector are facing competition in the current markets which has led to the need for coming up with better ways and strategies of managing material resources hence eliminating wastage in the value chain and thus enhancing organizational performance.

According to a survey carried out by Mutwol (2013), on the impact of the collapse of Caltex in Uganda, it was found that the oil sector had suffered so much over the past years due to lack of adequate commitment to timely funding of materials procurement, poor material planning, poor inventory control, purchasing problems, quality control problems; stores control problems, material movement and even surplus disposal problems. Therefore, this study became inevitable in view of the developing and changing nature of the Ugandan economy given the nature of the environment: Economic, Political, changes in technological environment, government regulations, multiple taxation, environmental degradation and reduction in quality of raw materials as a result of re-cycling and stiffer competition. Thus materials **handling** should no longer be viewed as a drain-pipe, but as a serious stabilizing and economic growth potential factor. Unfortunately, few studies exist on the role of Materials handling practices on Organizational Performance however Mutego Distributors Limited has not yet been put under consideration and therefore the study attempts to fill this knowledge gap.

2.4 Lead time management practices and organizational performance

A more conventional definition of lead time in the supply chain management realm is the time from the moment the customer places an order (the moment you learn of the requirement) to the moment it is received by the customer. In the absence of finished goods or intermediate (work in progress) inventory, it is the time it takes to actually manufacture the order without any inventory other than raw materials. In the manufacturing environment, lead time has the same definition as that of Supply Chain Management, but it includes the time required to ship the parts from the supplier (PMI, 2008). The shipping time is included because the manufacturing company needs to know when the parts were available for Material Requirements Planning (MRP). It is also possible for lead time to include the time it takes for a company to process and have the part ready for manufacturing once it has been received. The time it takes a company to unload a product from a truck, inspect it, and move it into storage is non-trivial. With tight manufacturing constraints or when a company is using Just in Time manufacturing it is important for supply chain to know how long their own internal processes take (PMI, 2008).

Total lead-time is made up of time devoted to processing orders, to procuring and manufacturing items, and to transporting items between the various stages of the supply chain. However, lead times can often be reduced if items are transported immediately after they are manufactured or arrive from suppliers (David et al., 2000). Lead-time typically includes two components: Information lead times (i.e., the time it takes to process an order) and Order lead times (i.e., the time it takes to produce and ship the item). Information lead time can be reduced by using very sophisticated and modern communication system while Order lead time can be reduced through efficient supply chain management (David et al 2000).

Alp et al (2003) assert that the best way to hedge a supply chain against random fluctuations in demand is through modification of lead time in the system dynamically. They argue that this can be done through having flexibility in the supply chain lead time by working with multiple suppliers, using multiple transportation options, having the option to expedite certain processes, or having different possible routes for a unit to go through the supply chain.

Jader (2012) argues that reduction in lead time in service delivery is not a new concept. He asserts that the opportunity to reduce lead time in service delivery lies in the service process itself. The time it takes to provide a particular service to a customer is very significant. He further suggests that for an organization to be able to reduce lead time, it should include lead

time reduction as a company strategy. This will enable the company to address lead time issues more efficiently.

Agile supply chain requires minimum total lead-times defined as the time taken from a customer raising a request for a product or service until it is delivered (Christopher, 2000). Lead time reduction within the supplier-production-distribution chain is the mechanism for time based competition. Management of lead time can be competitive advantage that can enhance customer satisfaction. Managing time may be the mirror image of managing quality, cost, innovation, and productivity. For reducing lead time it is essential to adopt Just in time philosophy and need of continuous improvement focus on issues i.e. flexible manufacturing cells (FMC) or flexible manufacturing systems (FMS), automation tools and efficient information technology tools (Christopher,2000).

2.5 Summary of Literature Review

The literature showed that there are a number of studies in place that have looked at impact of inventory management practices on performance in the world and Uganda. However, the literature reviewed is reportedly done in previous years of 2013 and below; mostly outside Uganda and not in the scope of Kampala. Currently there are a number of new empirical findings worthy to be empirically tested to weigh the progress especially in inventory management practices affecting organizations in Kampala. This will reveal new works in place especially on inventory management practices and organizational performance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and techniques that were used to address the research problem. It describes the research design, population, sampling instruments, validity, reliability and procedures for data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed cross sectional survey research design as the overall strategy. Cross-sectional study was used in this study because it emphasizes detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. The researcher employed both

quantitative and qualitative research approaches because they complement one another. Using both helped cover more areas, while using only one approach was defective (Barifaijo et al 2010).

Mugenda et al (1990) contends that a survey that is a descriptive study essentially concerned with describing, recording, analyzing and interpretation of conditions that exist or that once existed or as they were or as they may be (Oso et al 2009). Surveys do not manipulate variables nor arrange for events to happen, but focuses only on conditions or relations that exist, opinions held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing (Kathuri et al.2009). The researcher used descriptive because it was one of the suitable methods to obtain information concerning current situations.

3.2 The Study Population

This comprised of staff and support staff members of Mutego Distributors ltd who made a total of 110. These included departments like administration, Stores, Operations/Production departments and others. This enabled the researcher to get relevant information from the right people. Data was analyzed using percentages and trend analysis technique and presented in tables and figures.

3.3 Sample Techniques and Sampling Size

Since there are different categories of people, different methods were used to draw samples from each category.

3.3.1 Sample selection

The research sample selection to be employed was Stratified sampling because precision from the results increase since the sampling error emanating from different strata are minimized.

The researcher also used simple random sampling to select respondents from each stratum to represent views of the rest in the stratum. Simple random sampling allowed each member in each of the categories an equal and independent chance of selection, thereby reducing bias (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

Purposive sampling was used to select key informants like administration, Stores, Operations/Production departments and others on account of their knowledge on inventory management and profitability. This method was selected because it ensured that the critical aspects and feedback of the study was not misused out and increased the likelihood that variability common in any social phenomenon was represented in the data (Schwandt, 2001).

3.3.2 Sample size

A sample is simply a subset of the population. Sampling is the process of selecting sufficient numbers of elements from the population so that a study of the sample and its characteristics made it possible for the researcher to generalize such characteristics to the population elements (Sekaran, 2000). The study used a sample size of 86. In order to determine the sample size, Krejcie’s formula was applied as shown below. (Krejcie 1970)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample Size

N = Total Population

e = sampling error value (0.05) = 86

$$\left(n = \frac{110}{1 + 110(0.05)^2} \right)$$

The overall sample size constituted of 86 respondents derived from a total population of 110 employees of Mutego Distributors Ltd using the formular of Krejcie, R. V, & Morgan, D. W. (1970). The sample was categorised as seen below;

Table 1: Category of Sample size

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling technique	Data collection method
Administration	20	10	Purposive sampling	Simple administered questionnaire
Marketing and Sales	55	45	Simple random sampling	Interview
Operations and store	35	31	Simple random sampling	Simple administered questionnaire

Total	110	86		
--------------	------------	-----------	--	--

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. This involved use of questionnaires, focus group discussions and key informant interviews as explained below:

3.4.1 Quantitative data collection methods

Questionnaires:

These were administered in form of structured interviews. This involved asking the respondents different set of questions as the researcher fills in the answers. Only Mutego Distributors Ltd employees were targeted for the questionnaires because they are deemed to be the most knowledgeable on the subject under investigation. Structured interviews were standardized in order, of which questions are asked to the respondents and minimize the impact of variation so that each interview is offered with exactly the same questions in the same order. This guaranteed that answers were reliably collected and that comparisons were made with confidence between sample subgroups and respondents (Siute, 2005).

Questionnaires were constructed based on the research objectives. Questionnaires were preferred since they are easy to administer and time saving (Mugenda et al 2003). The questionnaire contained closed-ended questions using a liker scale (ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Not sure; 4= Agree; 5=Strongly Agree). Self-administered questionnaires were completed by those who can interpret the questionnaire. The researcher administered questionnaires to respondents who did not have the ability to easily interpret the questions probably because of their educational or literacy levels.

3.4.2 Qualitative data collection methods

Interview: these were used to obtain information from key respondents who were vastly knowledgeable on the subject matter under investigation. An interview guide was developed to guide data collection on key critical aspect of the research and ensure comprehensive feedback. According to Schwandt, (2001) interviews ensure that critical aspects of the study did not miss out key issues on the impact of inventory management on profitability in Mutego Distributors Ltd.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used interviews and self-administered questionnaires and document analysis for data collection.

3.5.1 Interview guide

The interview method of research involved a face-to-face meeting in which a researcher (interviewer) asked an individual a series of questions. A number of respondents were interviewed to clarify on several issues arising from the researchers need and objectives.

3.5.2 Self-administered Questionnaires

A questionnaire, according to Webster et al (2002) is a written or printed form used in gathering information on some subject, consisting of a set of questions to be submitted to one or more persons. Simple open ended, simple choice and self-administered questionnaires were distributed to suggested informants. They was brief, precise and to the objective of the study. The questions were mainly used to fall in the age bracket of the research.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher developed a proposal which after approval get an introduction letter from the supervisor at Uganda management institute to help him access different offices and relevant personnel where the study was carried out. The researcher arranged days for face to face interview with the people she was to interview.

Questionnaires were also given to the assistants to be distributed to the relevant people to the topic of research. The researcher visited different offices in the different facilities to find out how relevant this study was to the organization (Mutego Distributors Limited) and the country. She also visited the library to find out documents in relation to this.

3.6.1 Data Processing and analysis

The result obtained from the questionnaires and interviews involved editing, coding, tabulation and interpretation of the data using SPSS. Data collected was edited for completeness, accuracy, uniformity, consistence, and its comprehensiveness. In order to classify all the answers given by the respondents into meaningful categories for purposes of bringing out their important pattern, coding was used.

3.7 Data quality control

Data safeguarding and ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the same quality control comprises of validity of the instrument that was used in the study. This was maintained through

tests of validity and reliability as explained below. This was important to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaires and interview guide in collecting the required data. Quality control deals with the validity and reliability of instruments aimed at controlling extraneous variables (Oso and Onen, 2005).

3.7.1 Validity

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results (Mugenda, 1999). Validity also refers to the ability to produce findings and information that are in agreement with theoretical or conceptual values (Mugenda, 1999).

To ensure validity, reliability and credibility of the instruments used, questionnaires were constructed by the researcher, manually edited by the supervisor to correct possible mistakes and verified for the survey. Validity of the response was ensured by synchronizing responses from administration, Stores, Operations/Production departments and others. The results obtained were used to write the report.

This was validated by quick understanding of the questions and qualitative nature of answers supplied by the respondents.

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total number of items rated in questionnaire}}$$

Table 2:.Determination of validity of instruments

	Relevant items	Not relevant items	Total
Rater 1	11	5	16
Rater 2	15	6	21
Total	26	5	37

Table 2, showed that the computed CVI is 0.7 and this was the standard coefficient of 0.70 thus the research instruments were considered valid

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda, 1999). It is also the ability to produce accurate results.

The reliability of instruments was established basing on the preliminary results derived from the pilot study based on Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The pilot study was conducted among 9 respondents representing 10% of the sample size. These were given questionnaires to fill in and thereafter, the questionnaires was collected and analyzed for reliability. The same test was given to the same sample after a period of three days in order to determine the reliability coefficient test of the responses between the two tests. The study was tested for reliability coefficient basing on Cronbach's Alpha method for reliability and content validity index. All the values for reliability coefficients exceeded 0.7 implying that these results were reliable and consistent. In the same way, the content validity index values had to exceed 0.7 implying that the study yielded valid results as indicated below.

Table 3: Valid results

Construct Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Quality Information	0.75	5
Personnel	0.87	5
Data management process	0.74	5
Technology	0.86	5
Mean	0.805	

The mean for the reliability test is established at 0.805 which is well above 0.70 and therefore the internal consistency (reliability) of the instrument was confirmed.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The researcher obtained a letter from Uganda Management Institute allowing her to go to the field to collect the data. She used this letter as an introduction and to seek permission in the field where she collected data from. The major ethical problem that the researcher faced during this study was the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents including the information they were willing to provide. To ensure confidentiality and privacy, the respondents were told upfront that participation in the study is voluntary and they are not under any pressure to answer questions they are not comfortable with, their names were required as well.

Information relating to inventory management and performance is sensitive and most administrators were unwilling to release it thinking it could expose inadequacies in their organization. The respondents were assured at the start of the data collection that the information they were giving was strictly for academic purposes and all data obtained on private matters was treated confidentially (Amin, 2005)

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discusses the findings of the study entitled “inventory management practices and performance of Mutego distributors’ ltd, Uganda. In the presentation of findings pie charts, tables, frequencies and percentages were used to explain the findings. The presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings were arranged according to the objectives of the study that included; examining the relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd, establishing the relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd and to examine the relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd. The researcher administered 86 questionnaires from which 76 were

returned fully filled by the respondents from which findings are based. Results were also obtained from interviews.

4.1 Response Rate

The researcher targeted a sample size of 86 respondents, from whom 76 respondents were able to fully respond to the questions asked in the data collection instruments giving a response rate of 88.4%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. Based on the assertion, the response rate was excellent.

4.2 Background Information of the Respondents

The researcher sought to identify the respondents by their background information which included the respondents' age, gender, period spent working, departments and level of education as presented below;

4.2.1 Gender of the respondents

The researcher aimed at determining the gender of the participants. Table 4.1 shows the findings.

Table 4: Gender of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid female	26	34.2	34.2
male	50	65.8	65.8
Total	76	100.0	100.0

Source: **Primary Data**

Table 4 above shows the gender of the respondents. According to the findings, 65.8% of the respondents were male, while the others were female being represented by 34.2% of the entire sample size, indicating that all sexes were represented in this study.

4.2.2 Marital status of the respondents

The researcher aimed at determining the marital status of the participants. Table 5 shows the findings

Table 5: Marital status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Single	30	39.5	39.5
Married	26	34.2	34.2
Divorced	16	21.1	21.1
Widowed	4	5.3	5.3
Total	76	100.0	100.0

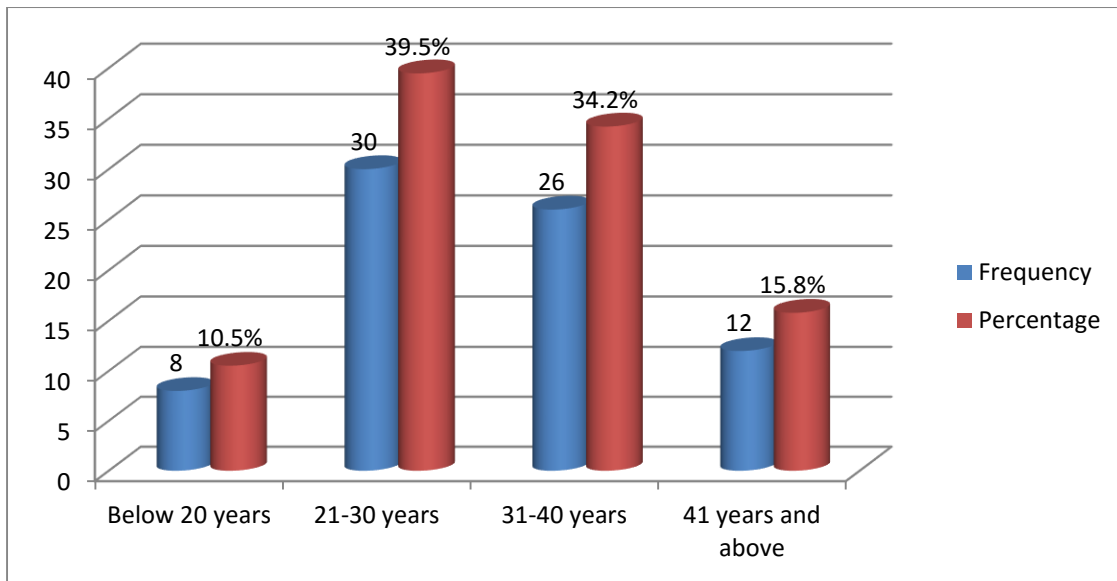
Source: **Primary Data**

As seen in the table above, 39.5% of people were single, 34.2% of the respondents were married compared to 21.1% and 5.3% who were divorced and widowed respectively. The marital status of each respondent was taken to be a very important demographic variable for the study because these position influences one's ability to engage in an activity that is environmental friendly or not. This indicated that people from different categories of marital status were part of this study.

4.2.2 Age bracket of the respondents

The study further deemed it necessary to determine the age bracket of the respondents and the findings are elaborated in figure 2 below;

Figure 2: Age bracket of the respondents



Source: **Primary Data**

From the above figure above, 30 (39.5%) of the respondents were in the age bracket of 21-30 years, 26 (34.2%) were of the age of 31-40 years, 12 (15.8%) were in the age bracket of 41 years and above and 8(10.5%) were below 20 years. This indicates that employees in Mutego distributors were mature enough to answer the questions in the questionnaires which meant that the information given was reliable.

4.2.3 Education background of the respondents

The study further deemed it necessary to determine the Education background of the respondents and the findings are illustrated in table 6 below

Table 6: Education level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid primary	10	13.2	13.2
secondary	27	35.5	35.5
tertiary	16	21.1	21.1
University	23	30.3	30.3
Total	76	100.0	100.0

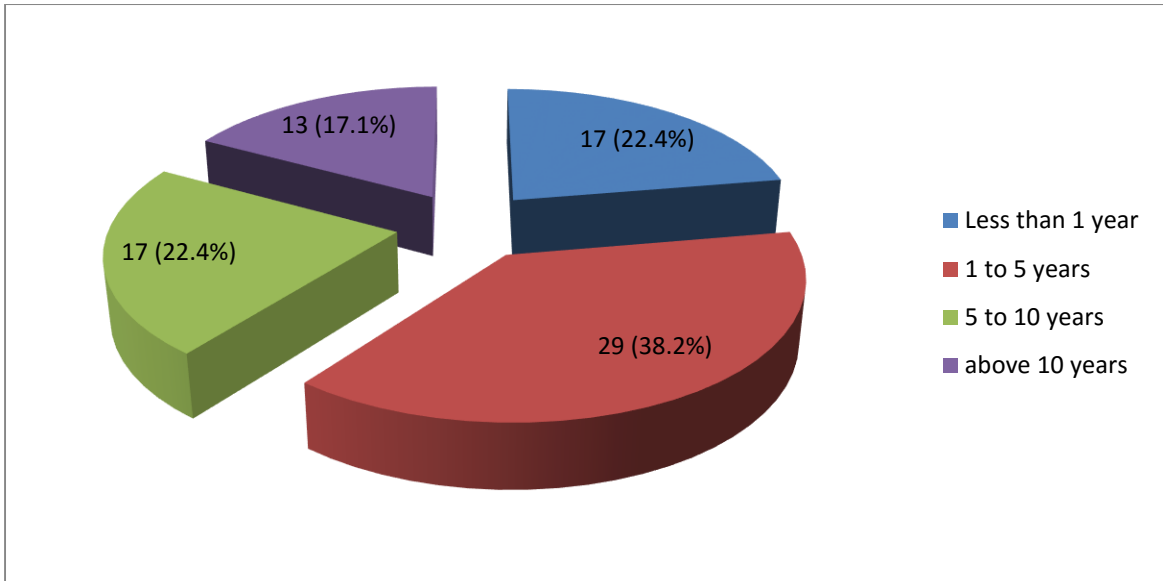
Source: Primary Data

The table above shows that according to the findings from the results characterizing the respondents by their level of education, those respondents that have attained secondary qualification are highest with a frequency of 27 members of the sample who represent a percentage of 35.5%. These were followed by respondents who had attained University qualification who constituted a frequency of 23 members which represented a percentage of 30.3%. 16(21.1%) had attained tertiary qualification and finally 10 (13.2%) had attained primary qualification. This is a clear representation that employees of Mutego Distributors in Uganda are educated enough to understand the issue pertaining the impact of inventory management practices on the performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd which is a basis for validating the findings. This further illustrated that the respondents were highly educated in their field of operation owing to the amount of knowledge acquired from school. This enabled them to give credible information relating to this research.

4.2.4 Period spent working at the Organization by the respondents

The study further deemed it necessary to determine the period spent working at organizations and the findings are elaborated in figure 3 below

Figure 3: Period spent working at Mutego distributors Ltd



Source: Primary Data

From the above figure, majority of the respondents had spent a period of 1-5 years working within the organization rated at 38.2%, this was followed by 22.4% who had spent 5-10 years and less than a year respectively finally those who had worked above 10 years rated at 17.1%. This indicates that the respondents had experience with the organization since in total majority had had been part of the organization for quite a long period of time. The results further illustrated that the organization has experienced staff. Experienced staffs are likely to perform better at their jobs due to the job experience gained over time.

4.2.5 Department of the respondents

The study further deemed it necessary to determine the department of the respondents and the findings are elaborated in table 7 below

Table 7: Department of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Top management	9	11.8	11.8
stores	12	15.8	15.8
Purchasing	19	25.0	25.0
Accounts	36	47.4	47.4
Total	76	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data

From the above table, 36 (47.4%) of the respondents were in the accounts department whereby they dealt with the verification and receipt of payments, 19 (25%) were in the purchasing department, 12 (15.8%) were in the stores department and 9(11.8%) were from the top management. This indicates that employees in Mutego distributors had reliable to knowledge to answer the questions in the questionnaires which meant that the information given was reliable and they were in a good position to give relevant information on the effects of inventory management practices on organizational performance.

4.3 Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study sought to establish the relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd. The employees were requested to respond to a number of statements by indicating their agreement using a five-point Likert scale of SD=Strongly Disagreed, D=Disagreed, N – Not sure, A=Agreed and SA = Strongly Agreed. The responses are summarized in the Table 8 below;

Table 8: Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

Item responses		Frequency	Percent	Mean
Inventory Management practices contribute greatly to the performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd	Strongly agree	20	26.3	2.43
	Agree	23	33.3	
	Not sure	17	22.4	
	Disagree	12	15.8	
	Strongly disagree	4	5.3	
Inventory Management helps in inventory planning and scheduling in Mutego Distributors Ltd	Strongly agree	16	21.1	2.22
	Agree	32	42.1	
	Not sure	23	30.3	
	Disagree	5	6.6	
	Strongly disagree	0	0.00	
Procurement/purchase dates and quantities are improved by inventory management practices	Strongly agree	17	22.4	2.07
	Agree	42	55.3	
	Not sure	12	15.8	
	Disagree	5	6.6	
	Strongly disagree	0	0.00	
Cost reduction in Mutego Distributors Ltd is a result of inventory management practices	Strongly agree	9	11.8	2.57
	Agree	32	42.1	
	Not sure	22	28.9	
	Disagree	9	11.8	
	Strongly disagree	4	5.3	
Inventory Management helps in effective stores management of Mutego Distributors Ltd	Strongly agree	11	14.5	2.67
	Agree	34	44.7	
	Not sure	10	13.2	
	Disagree	11	14.5	
	Strongly disagree	10	13.2	
Internal coordination in Mutego Distributors Ltd can be improved by inventory management	Strongly agree	15	19.7	2.99
	Agree	18	23.7	
	Not sure	8	10.5	
	Disagree	23	30.3	
	Strongly disagree	12	15.8	

Improved customer service can be realized with inventory management	Strongly agree	20	26.3	2.21
	Agree	34	44.7	
	Not sure	12	15.8	
	Disagree	6	7.9	
	Strongly disagree	4	5.3	
Good management practices improve inventory Management in Mutego Distributors Ltd	Strongly agree	18	23.7	2.45
	Agree	32	42.1	
	Not sure	7	9.2	
	Disagree	12	15.8	
	Strongly disagree	7	9.2	

N=76 Sources: Primary Data 2017

To analyze the findings, employees who strongly disagreed and those who disagreed were combined into one category of who opposed the items. In addition, employees who strongly agreed and those who agreed were combined into another category of those who concurred with the items. Another category was that of those employees who neither agreed nor disagreed, the not sure with the items. Thus, the three categories of employees were compared. Interpretation was then drawn from the comparisons of the three categories as shown in the following paragraph.

The respondents were asked whether Inventory Management practices contribute greatly to the performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd and the majority rated at 43 (56.6%) agreed to the statement, 17 (22.4%) were not sure and finally only 16 (21.1%) disagreed implying that Inventory Management practices contribute greatly to the performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd since the majority were in agreement. Basing on this finding, all the organizations consider storage productivity as a major aspect of organizational efficiency. When goods are stored well, their value is maintained.

Basing on the table above, the respondents were asked whether Inventory Management helps in inventory planning and scheduling in Mutego Distributors Ltd, majority rated at 48 (63.2%) agreed, 23 (30.3%) were not sure and only 5 (6.6%) disagreed implying that Inventory Management helps in inventory planning and scheduling in Mutego Distributors Ltd. This was in conformity with the findings of Gary (1997) who asserts that open storage method creates an ease in finding the products stored, and is suited for storing items which are less costly and low valued items while closed storage systems is best suited for items which are high valued

and having high risk to the environment and therefore only authorized personnel are allowed to operate.

59 (77.7%) agreed that Procurement/purchase dates and quantities are improved by inventory management practices, 12 (15.8%) were not sure and only 5 (6.6%) disagreed implying that Procurement/purchase dates and quantities are improved by inventory management practices.

Basing on the findings, Storage management practices provide tools to enable organizational operations to consistently offer exemplary service delivery, that unified data gives you the information integrity. These are in conformity with the findings of Ronald (1997) who asserts that IT is a competitive tool in the organization for realizing its corporate competitive strategy.

According to the table above, the respondents were asked whether Cost reduction in Mutego Distributors Ltd is a result of inventory management practices, majority rated at 41 (53.9%) agreed to the statement, 22 (28.9%) were not sure and 13 (17.1%) disagreed implying that Cost reduction in Mutego Distributors Ltd is a result of inventory management practices. The study showed that cost reduction is necessary for implementation of inventory management for performance of Mutego distributors. Inventory cost reduction eliminates wastages on the materials used for production of bottled soda at Mutego distributors. According to the study, holding stocks and ordering costs will increase the performance of an organization. Cost reduction helps in preparing employees towards managing the inventory ideology and also in achieving profitability objective of Mutego distributors. This is in line with the literature by A.O. Olukunle, (2008) that inventory management will eliminate wastages on the materials used for production.

According to the field findings, the respondents were asked whether Inventory Management helps in effective stores management of Mutego Distributors Ltd, majority rated at 45 (59.2%) agreed, this was followed by those who disagreed rated at 21 (27.7%) and finally 10 (13.2%) who were not sure implying that Inventory Management helps in effective stores management of Mutego Distributors Ltd. According to the field survey, effective Stores Management is an attempt to maintain a systematic and well organized infrastructure and an orderly inventory system. It is also concerned with the adequate supply of goods/products in the Stores, while minimizing inventory costs at the same time. These were in conformity with the findings of Hellen (1993) who stated that an enterprise's success can be greatly affected by the efficiency of its stores operations; efficient stores management can save money, help retain customers

and maintain continuous operations; but stores mismanagement can lose an enterprise money, customers and production.

In regards to the statement posed that the Internal coordination in Mutego Distributors Ltd can be improved by inventory management, the respondents rated at 35(46.1%) disagreed. This was followed by 33 (43.4%) who agreed and only 8 (10.5%) were not sure implying that this statement requires further research since it had a balanced view between those who agreed and disagreed. Basing on the findings, proper internal coordination brings about Good inventory management solutions to save employees and partners time. Less time spent on managing inventory results in greater productivity for the organization.

Basing on the table above, the respondents were asked whether Improved customer service can be realized with inventory management, majority rated at 54 (71%) agreed, 12 (15.8%) were not sure and only 10 (13.2%) disagreed implying that Improved customer service can be realized with inventory management. This helps to improve the organization's accuracy and efficiency, and the customers will love them for it. An employee from the administration department at Mutego distributors stated that:

“The customers will trust you to fulfill their needs, and you'll have exactly what they're looking for when they come back for more”

Basing on the table above, the respondents were asked whether Good management practices improve inventory Management in Mutego Distributors Ltd, majority rated at 50 (65.8%) agreed, 19 (25%) disagreed and only 7 (9.2%) were not sure implying that Good management practices improve inventory Management in Mutego Distributors Ltd. Basing on the findings, storage management isn't just a concern for companies that deal in finished goods, such as retailers and wholesalers. It's also critical for manufacturers, who maintain three types of inventory: raw materials, works in process and finished goods. If you run out of an essential ingredient or component, production will halt, which can be extremely costly. If you don't have a supply of finished goods on hand to fill orders as they come in, you risk losing customers thus Staying on top of inventory is essential if you're to keep the line running and keep products moving out the door.

From the descriptive statistics performed, mean responses with the highest effects included: Inventory Management practices contribute greatly to the performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd (2.43), inventory Management helps in inventory planning and scheduling in Mutego

Distributors Ltd (2.22), internal coordination in Mutego Distributors Ltd can be improved by inventory management (2.99) and inventory Management helps in effective stores management of Mutego Distributors Ltd (2.67) implies that the respondents “Agree” that storage management practices will lead to a high organizational performance. This trend is in agreement with those found in the available literature. Majority of the respondents admitted that storage management practices are a highly significant factor to the organizational performance at Mutego Distributors Limited.

4.3.1 Relationship between Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

In order to determine the relationship between storage management practices and organizational performance at Mutego Distributors, correlation was conducted. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength of the relationship between storage management practices and organizational performance at Mutego Distributors. The significance of the coefficient (p) was used to test the objective by comparing p to the critical significance level at 0.05. This procedure was applied in testing the other objectives and thus, a lengthy introduction is not repeated in the subsequent sections of the testing. The results are summarized in Tables 9.

Table 9: Relationship between store management practices and organizational performance

		Storage manage practices	Organizational performance
Storage manage practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.185
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.110
	N	76	76
Organizational performance	Pearson Correlation	.185	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.110	
	N	76	76

According to the results in Table 9, storage management practices and organizational performance ($r=0.185$, $p<0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis that stated that storage management practices would have a significant relationship on organizational performance is partially accepted. This means that there is a positive relationship between storage management practices and organizational performance at Mutego distributors.

4.4 The relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study sought to establish the relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd and the findings were as explained in the following table;

Table 10: Relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

Item responses		Frequency	Percent	Mean
Material handling practices in the organization lead to reduction in wastes	Strongly agree	16	21.1	2.59
	Agree	28	36.8	
	Not sure	12	15.8	
	Disagree	11	14.5	
	Strongly disagree	9	11.8	
Material handling practices in the organization lead to Reduction in production costs	Strongly agree	24	31.6	2.17
	Agree	29	38.2	
	Not sure	13	17.1	
	Disagree	6	7.9	
	Strongly disagree	4	5.3	
Material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased product quality	Strongly agree	32	42.1	2.12
	Agree	24	31.6	
	Not sure	7	9.2	
	Disagree	5	6.6	
	Strongly disagree	8	10.5	
Material handling practices in the organization lead to Timely deliveries	Strongly agree	21	27.6	2.30
	Agree	30	39.5	
	Not sure	9	11.8	
	Disagree	13	17.1	
	Strongly disagree	3	3.9	

Material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased profitability	Strongly agree	14	18.4	2.62
	Agree	26	34.2	
	Not sure	19	25	
	Disagree	9	11.8	
	Strongly disagree	8	10.5	
Material handling practices in the organization lead to Reduced stock levels	Strongly agree	16	21.1	2.59
	Agree	28	36.8	
	Not sure	12	15.8	
	Disagree	11	14.5	
	Strongly disagree	9	11.8	
Material handling practices in the organization lead to Decreased production cycle times	Strongly agree	24	31.6	1.92
	Agree	41	53.9	
	Not sure	6	7.9	
	Disagree	3	3.9	
	Strongly disagree	2	2.6	
Material handling practices in the organization lead to System flexibility	Strongly agree	21	27.6	2.24
	Agree	30	39.5	
	Not sure	16	21.1	
	Disagree	4	5.3	
	Strongly disagree	5	6.6	

N=76 Source: primary data 2017

The study findings show that 44 (57.9%) of the respondents agreed that Material handling practices in the organization lead to reduction in wastes, this was followed by those who

disagreed rated at 20 (26.3%) and finally 12 (15.8%) who were not sure implying that Material handling practices in the organization lead to reduction in wastes. These discoveries are in accordance with the discoveries of Stadtler (2008) who found that recognizing and keeping up the appropriate measure of stock is one of the greatest difficulties that inventory network chiefs confront. Stock sits as an exchange off between consumer loyalty and material accessibility and in addition expanding stock holding expenses and working capital. The parameters that are utilized for overseeing stock, for example, security stock amount, and renewal arrange amount, reorder point in a Continuous Review strategy, or survey period in a Periodic Review approach utilize elements, for example, benefit levels, requests, and provider recharging lead times as contributions for their count (Inman, 2009). However quickly evolving markets, contenders, and item lifecycles have made audit periods that worked in more settled times inadmissible for now's speed of business execution. Inability to screen nature and upgrade these contributions on an incessant and nitty gritty premise is a formula for wasteful stock speculation.

According to the table above, 53(69.8%) agreed that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Reduction in production costs, 13 (17.1%) were not sure and only 10 (13.2%) disagreed implying that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Reduction in production costs. Basing on the field findings, when material isn't managed well, you can also wind up with overstock too much of certain items. Overstock comes with its own set of problems. The longer an item sits unsold in inventory, the greater the chance it will never sell at all, meaning you'll have to write it off, or at least discount it deeply. Products go out of style or become obsolete. Perishable items spoil. Items that linger in storage get damaged or stolen. And excessive material has to be stored, counted and handled, which can add ongoing costs. An accounting officer from the Accounts department stated that:

“The more times an item is handled, the more it costs you. Barcodes, scanners or RFID technology will greatly reduce the time spent updating inventory. As a piece of material is moved from receiving or the shop floor, it can immediately be entered into a database.”

According to the table above, 56(73.7%) agreed that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased product quality, 7 (9.2%) were not sure and only 13 (17.1%) disagreed implying that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased product quality. Bowersox & Closs (2002), articulated that improvement in continuity of supplies with improved material handling will lead to improvement in cooperation and will

also enhance cooperation's and communications with reduced duplication of efforts, reduction in material costs and improvement in quality control, which are the main benefits of materials management

According to the table above, 51(67.1%) agreed that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Timely deliveries, 9 (11.8%) were not sure and only 16 (21%) disagreed implying that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Timely deliveries. Basing on the findings, maintaining good material handling principles will ensure the efficient and timely delivery of high quality inventory data. To do this an inventory management system needs to be established and should include: a clear inventory process so that key activities and resources can be focused towards delivery deadlines and delivery quality, institutional arrangements where a clearly defined roles and responsibilities for delivering the inventory to specified time and quality standards and finally a quality framework to ensure that the data is fit for purpose.

According to the table above, 40(52.6%) agreed that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased profitability, 17 (22.3%) disagreed and only 19 (25%) were not sure implying that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased profitability. This was in conformity with the findings of Lysons (2006)who asserts that material handling enhances profitability by reducing costs associated with storage and handling of materials. It equally makes it possible for material manager to carryout accurate and efficient operation of the manufacturing organization through decoupling of individual segment of the total operation and it entails the process of assessing of stock into the store house and the issue of stock. An employee from the administration department at Mutego distributors stated that:

By deciding inventory norms nationally and through control systems, inventory turnover can be maximized which in turn will maximize current assets turnover and ROI.

According to the table above, 44(57.9%) agreed that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Reduced stock levels, 12 (15.8%) were not sure and only 20 (26.3%) disagreed implying that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Reduced stock levels. Basing on the findings, businesses who actively manage their inventory report a 10-25% decrease in stock-outs. A supervisor from the operations department at Mutego distributors stated that:

By proper planning and control of spare parts, capacity utilization can be increased which will increase the turnover of fixed assets and consequently increase ROI

According to the table above, 65(85.5%) agreed that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Decreased production cycle times , 6 (7.9%) were not sure and only 5 (6.5%) disagreed implying that Material handling practices in the organization lead to Decreased production cycle times. Basing on the findings, material handling isn't just a concern for companies that deal in finished goods, such as retailers and wholesalers. It's also critical for manufacturers, who maintain three types of inventory: raw materials, works in process and finished goods. If you run out of an essential ingredient or component, production will halt, which can be extremely costly. If you don't have a supply of finished goods on hand to fill orders as they come in, you risk losing customers. Staying on top of inventory is essential if you're to keep the line running and keep products moving out the door.

According to the table above, 51(67.1%) agreed that Material handling practices in the organization lead to System flexibility, 16 (21.1%) were not sure and only 9 (11.1%) disagreed implying that Material handling practices in the organization lead to System flexibility. Basing on the findings, the staff of Mutege distributors are eligible to Know when items are received, picked, packed, shipped, kitted, manufactured, etc and know when they need to order more, when they are over-stocked, or under-stocked due to proper material handling.

According to the marketing managers, her department performs the role of marketing research and development, planning and executing of the marketing activities within the organization which includes pricing, promotion and distribution of the finish products.

Her department also relies on the purchasing department to ensure that all stock held for sale are stored, issued and controlled as efficiently as possible. The sales staffs continuously depend on the purchasing department; to ensure that finish stock is available as and when required.

When the question of how the organization ensures quicker distribution to the various depots for easy access to consumers was posed, she replied that, after the right packaging has been done and right inventories taken by officers, goods are transported to the various company depots depending on request with company trucks far ahead of time before the various depots run out of stock. With issue of materials management, she confirmed that the organization does not have materials management department.

4.4.1 Testing the relationship between material handling practices and organizational performance

In order to determine relationship between material handling practices and organizational performance at Mutego distributors, correlation analysis was conducted. The results are summarized in Tables 11 below:

Table 11: Relationship between material handling and organizational performance

		Material handling practices	Organizational performance
Material handling practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.742
	N	76	76
Organizational performance	Pearson Correlation	.038	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.742	
	N	76	76

According to the results in Table 11, material handling practices and organizational performance have no significant relationship ($r = 0.038$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis that stated that material handling practices would have a significant influence on organizational performance is not accepted. This means that material handling practices have no effect on organizational performance at Mutego distributors.

4.5 The relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study sought to establish the relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd and the findings were as explained in the following table;

Table 12: Relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

Item responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
Strongly agree	20	26.3	2.33

Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in inventories	Agree	31	40.8	
	Not sure	11	14.5	
	Disagree	8	10.5	
	Strongly disagree	6	7.9	
Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Shorter production cycle times	Strongly agree	16	21.1	2.58
	Agree	27	35.5	
	Not sure	11	14.5	
	Disagree	17	22.4	
	Strongly disagree	5	6.6	
Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduced obsolescence and surplus	Strongly agree	7	9.2	2.51
	Agree	41	53.9	
	Not sure	14	18.4	
	Disagree	10	13.2	
	Strongly disagree	4	5.3	
Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in materials cost	Strongly agree	11	14.5	2.37
	Agree	44	57.9	
	Not sure	10	13.2	
	Disagree	4	5.3	
	Strongly disagree	7	9.2	
Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Improvement in product quality	Strongly agree	9	11.8	2.12
	Agree	50	65.8	
	Not sure	16	21.1	

	Disagree	1	1.3	
	Strongly disagree	0	0.00	
Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased sales	Strongly agree	5	6.6	2.51
	Agree	32	42.1	
	Not sure	34	44.7	
	Disagree	5	6.6	
	Strongly disagree	0	0.00	
Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased profitability	Strongly agree	24	31.6	2.17
	Agree	29	38.2	
	Not sure	13	17.1	
	Disagree	6	7.9	
	Strongly disagree	4	5.3	
Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased customer satisfaction	Strongly agree	32	42.1	2.12
	Agree	24	31.6	
	Not sure	7	9.2	
	Disagree	5	6.6	
	Strongly disagree	8	10.5	

N=76 Sources: Primary Data 2017

According to the table above, 51(67.1%) agreed that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in inventories, 14 (18.4%) disagreed and only 11(14.5%) were not sure implying that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in inventories. Basing on the findings, businesses who actively manage their lead time report a 2-10% increase in sales. In regards to the above findings, one of the sales personnel in Mutego distributors stated that:

By developing proper systems and control on issue of materials, the consumption can be minimized, reduction in wastes and rejects, resulting in reducing the materials cost, which will increase the profit margin.

According to the table above, 43(56.6%) agreed that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Shorter production cycle times, 11 (14.5%) were not sure and only 22 (29%) disagreed implying that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Shorter production cycle times. This was in conformity with the findings of Halachmi et al (2005) who assert that reduced Lead Times can mean reduced inventory and more cash on hand for the businesses. In several aspects it means less risk, exposure and management of materials.

According to the table above, 50(63.1%) agreed that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduced obsolescence and surplus, 14 (18.4%) were not sure and only 14 (18.5%) disagreed implying that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduced obsolescence and surplus. Basing on the findings, businesses with outdated inventory management systems may rely on sales employees to project what will sell the next season. The purchasing department purchases merchandise based on the sales team's gut feeling instead of using a computerized forecasting system. Continued inaccurate assumptions could lead to a rise in obsolete inventory. Changing the inventory system from uncertainty to accuracy with proper planning and automatic replenishing systems can diminish exposure to obsolescence.

Furthermore, when a business does not use a sales and operations planning process for its ordering schedules and lot sizes, it could result in obsolete inventory due to inaccurate assessment of product life cycles. For example, for a marketing campaign, a team plans its production and ordering schedule. Based on the production, the promotions team works with the inventory team to determine lot sizes so the right products are available for the promotion.

According to the table above, 55(72.4%) agreed that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in materials cost, 11 (14.5%) disagreed and only 10 (13.2%) were not sure implying that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in materials cost. Basing on the field findings, lead time management helps to result in decreased inventory write-offs/ write-downs, plus lower inventory holding costs.

According to the table above, 59(77.6%) agreed that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Improvement in product quality, 16 (21.1) were not sure and only 1 (1.3%) disagreed implying that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to

Improvement in product quality. This was in conformity with the findings of Blackburn et al., (1992) who emphasized that today's customers around the globe demand a product as they want it, when they want it, and at the best possible price. In today's highly competitive global marketplace they are placing greater value on quality and delivery time. Providers of services similarly have begun to place more value on quality and delivery time and companies are trying to gain a competitive edge and improve profitability through cutting cost, increasing quality and improving delivery.

In regards to the above, the drivers of Mutego distributors emphasized that:

Incoming goods are delivered to the purchasing department team of inspectors on arrival to verify its right content and specification as stated on the quotation form. Inspection in this context means the examination of incoming commodities for the right quality and quantity.

According to the table above, 37(48.7%) agreed that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased sales, 34 (44.7%) were not sure and only 5 (6.6%) disagreed implying that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased sales. According to the findings, sales depots like Mutego distributors rely on sales to earn revenue and increase profits. These companies purchase merchandise and resell it to customers. Inventory control involves considering which items to buy and the quantity of each. Styles change, and so do customer tastes. The company needs to anticipate the amount of sales it can make at a profitable price. When the inventory becomes obsolete, the company can no longer sell it profitably and loses money. Retail firms increase their total sales when they use effective lead time management.

In regards to the above, a sales officer at Mutego distributors stated that:

Optimizing the operations is a complex task due to the complexity involved in its various processes of a manufacturing firm. The operations such as planning, scheduling, tracking, monitoring and dispatching becomes a major task so as to satisfy potential goals of increasing throughput, reducing inventories and costs. In order to overcome this complexity, there should be a proper communication and relationship with the supplier within and outside the firm.

According to the table above, 53(69.8%) agreed that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased profitability, 13 (17.1%) were not sure and only 10 (13.2%) disagreed implying that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased profitability. These were in conformity with the findings of Lei et al (1999) who asserted that

another way of using lead time management to increase profitability involves creating demand by acquiring a limited quantity of a product. By offering a limited supply of items, the company creates an increased demand among consumers. Each customer wants to purchase the item before the company runs out. The company can charge a higher price for the item because of the higher demand. This increases the company's total sales thus improving profitability levels.

According to the table above, 56(73.7%) agreed that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased customer satisfaction, 7 (9.2%) were not sure and only 13 (17.1%) disagreed implying that Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased customer satisfaction. Basing on these findings, lead time management practices Optimize the value of goods you have and increase inventory turnover by keeping fewer slow-moving products on hand, while increasing your stock levels on profitable goods.

From the descriptive statistics performed using the data collected relating to the relationship between lead time management and organizational performance, the effects with the highest means included: lead time management practices in the organization lead to Shorter production cycle times (2.58), lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduced obsolescence and surplus(2.51), lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased sales (2.51) and lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in materials cost (2.37). These responses had means above 2.4 implying that the respondents “Agreed” with those propositions.

4.5.1 Testing the relationship between lead-time management and organizational performance

In order to determine relationship between lead-time management practices and organizational performance at Mutego distributors, correlation analysis was conducted. The results are summarized in Tables 13 below

Table 13: Relationship between leadtime management and organizational performance

		Lead time management practices	Organizational performance
Lead time management practices	Pearson Correlation	1	-.163
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.160
	N	76	76
Organizational performance	Pearson Correlation	-.163	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.160	
	N	76	76

According to the results in Table 13, lead-time management practices and organizational performance have no significant relationship ($r = -0.163$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis that stated that lead time management would have a significant influence on organizational performance is not accepted. This means that lead-time management practices have no effect on organizational performance at Mutego distributors Ltd thus the more the lead time, the less the performance of Mutego distributor Ltd.

4.6 Organizational performance

The study sought to establish organizational performance at Mutego distributors and the findings were as explained in the following table;

Table 14: Performance of Mutego distributors

Item responses		Frequency	Percent	Mean
My organization is growing faster	Strongly agree	20	26.3	2.13
	Agree	36	47.4	
	Not sure	10	13.2	
	Disagree	10	13.2	

	Strongly disagree	0	0.00	
My organization is more profitable	Strongly agree	28	36.8	2.01
	Agree	30	39.5	
	Not sure	7	9.2	
	Disagree	11	14.5	
	Strongly disagree	0	0.00	
My organization is providing higher quality services.	Strongly agree	5	6.6	2.59
	Agree	46	60.5	
	Not sure	7	9.2	
	Disagree	11	14.5	
	Strongly disagree	7	9.2	
My organization is efficient in using resources	Strongly agree	26	34.2	2.00
	Agree	36	47.4	
	Not sure	3	3.9	
	Disagree	10	13.2	
	Strongly disagree	1	1.3	
My organization is delivering orders quicker.	Strongly agree	25	32.9	2.01
	Agree	38	50	
	Not sure	0	0.00	
	Disagree	13	17.1	
	Strongly disagree	0	0.00	
	Strongly agree	25	32.9	2.13

In my organization, everything that matters to performance is explicitly reported	Agree	32	42.1	
	Not sure	11	14.5	
	Disagree	0	0.00	
	Strongly disagree	8	10.5	
My organization has a large market share in Uganda	Strongly agree	9	11.8	2.22
	Agree	50	65.8	
	Not sure	8	10.5	
	Disagree	9	11.8	
	Strongly disagree	0	0.00	

N=76 Source: Primary Data 2017

According to the table above, 56 (73.7%) agreed that the organization is growing faster, 10 (13.2%) disagreed and only 10 (13.2%) disagreed implying that the organization is growing faster.

According to the table above, the respondents rated at 58 (76.3%) agreed that the organization is more profitable, 11 (14.5%) disagreed and 7 (9.2%) were not sure implying that the organization is more profitable.

According to the table above, the respondents rated at 51 (67.1%) agreed that the organization is providing higher quality services, 18 (23.7%) disagreed and 7 (9.2) were not sure implying that the organization is providing higher quality services.

According to the table above, majority of the respondents rated at 62 (81.6%) agreed the organization is efficient in using resources, 11 (14.5%) disagreed and 3 (3.9%) were not sure implying that the organization is efficient in using resources

According to the table above, all the respondents rated at 63 (83.9%) agreed that the organization is delivering orders quicker and 13 (17.1%) disagreed implying that the organization is delivering orders quicker.

According to the table above, 57(75%) agreed that in the organization, everything that matters to performance is explicitly reported, 11 (14.5%) were not sure and only 8 (10.5%) were not sure implying that in the organization, everything that matters to performance is explicitly reported.

According to the table above, the respondents rated at 59 (77.6%) agreed that the organization has a large market share in Uganda, 9 (11.8%) disagreed and 8(10.5) were not sure implying that the organization has a large market share in Uganda.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION , CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The study examined the effects of inventory management practices and performance of Mutego distributors' ltd, Uganda. The study specifically set out to: examine the relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd, establish relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd and to examine the relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd. This chapter presents the summary, discussion, conclusions and recommendations arising out of the study findings according to the objectives.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 The relationship between Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study tested the first hypothesis; “storage management practices has a significant positive influence on performance of an organization” and it was accepted. This is because there was a moderately positive relationship ($r=0.185$) between storage management practices and organizational performance whereby an improvement in storage management practices increases on the performance of the organization.

The study revealed that 56.6% agreed that storage management practices contribute greatly to the performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd. Basing on this finding; organizations consider storage productivity as a major aspect of organizational efficiency. When goods are stored well, their value is maintained. Storage management helps in inventory planning and scheduling in Mutego Distributors Ltd.

77.7% agreed that Procurement/purchase dates and quantities are improved by inventory management practices. Basing on the findings, Storage management practices provide tools to enable organizational operations to consistently offer exemplary service delivery, that unified data gives you the information integrity.

The study further revealed that Cost reduction in Mutego Distributors Ltd is a result of inventory management practices. Cost reduction helps in preparing employees towards managing the inventory ideology and also in achieving profitability objective of Mutego distributors.

The study revealed that storage Management helps in effective stores management of Mutego Distributors Ltd. According to the field survey, effective Stores Management is an attempt to maintain a systematic and well organized infrastructure and an orderly inventory system. It is also concerned with the adequate supply of goods/products in the Stores, while minimizing inventory costs at the same time. Improved customer service can be realized with inventory management. This helps to improve the organization’s accuracy and efficiency, and the customers will love them for it. Basing on the findings, storage management isn't just a concern for companies that deal in finished goods, such as retailers and wholesalers. It's also critical for manufacturers, who maintain three types of inventory: raw materials, works in process and finished goods.

5.1.2 Relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study tested the second hypothesis: “there is no significant relationship between material handling and performance of organizations”, and it was rejected. This is because material handling practices and organizational performance have no significant relationship ($r = 0.038$).

The study revealed that material handling practices in the organization lead to reduction in wastes, material handling practices in the organization lead to reduction in production costs. Basing on the field findings, when material is not managed well, you can also wind up with overstock too much of certain items. Overstock comes with its own set of problems.

The respondents rated at 73.7% agreed that material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased product quality whereby any improvement in continuity of supplies with improved material handling will lead to improvement in cooperation and will also enhance cooperation’s and communications with reduced duplication of efforts, reduction in material costs and improvement in quality control, which are the main benefits of materials management.

This study established that through material handling practices can achieve the benefits of effective use of labour, providing system flexibility, increasing productivity, decreasing lead times, reduction in wastes, reduction in production costs, increased product quality are achieved. The ratings showed that material handling does not play a vital role in organizational performance however organizations must ensure that inventory control system be highly involved in material management activities hence achieving higher organizational performance.

5.1.3 The relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study tested the third hypothesis: “lead-time management practices have a significant positive influence on performance of organizations” and it was rejected. This is because there was no significant relationship ($r=-0.163$) between lead-time management practices and organizational performance whereby an improvement in lead-time management practices does not improve on the performance of organizations. In regards to this negative relationship, the more the supply delays, the more the decline in customer satisfaction.

Basing on the above findings, shorter lead times allow designers to be more flexible and creative, prevent lost business, and increase cash flow, having a consistently quick turnaround

helps businesses gain traction and outpace their competitors. Further, it's arguable that these benefits may overcome the advantage of lower labor costs in cheaper foreign factories. However, Mutengo distributors Ltd sometimes do not supply the products in the shortest time possible but they offer extra products at the same price which helps in customer loyalty where by the price of the product mainly affects the performance not the lead time.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 The relationship between Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The findings revealed that performance in an organization can be increased with a change in storage management practices. The findings of this study could be attributed to the fact that all the organizations consider storage productivity as a major aspect of organizational efficiency. When goods are stored well, their value is maintained and that storage management helps in inventory planning and scheduling in Mutego Distributors Ltd. Storage management implies the coordination of materials controlling, utilization and purchasing. It has also the purpose of getting the right inventory at the right place in the right time with right quantity because it is directly connected with the production. The objective of any organization is to get a good return out of every cedi invested in the company. According to Pandey (2005) management through their policies, coordination, decision and control mechanisms must maximize the return on investment (ROI).

Peterson et al (2007) while supporting Pandey (2005) states that it is clear that ROI can be maximized either by increasing profit margin or by reducing the capital employed or by both. In the market situation, sales price cannot be increased (rather there is a demand to reduce it) and as such profit can be increased only by reducing the material costs. On the other hand, the opportunity to reduce the overheads and capital employed is more by inventory reduction (Drury, 2002). It is thus evident that the ROI can be maximized by either reducing the material cost or reducing the current assets by way of inventory of materials or can be optimized by increasing profits

Too much inventory consumes physical space, creates a financial burden, and increases the possibility of damage, spoilage and loss. Further, excessive inventory frequently compensates for sloppy and inefficient management, poor forecasting, haphazard scheduling, and inadequate attention to process and procedures. On the other hand, too little inventory often disrupts manufacturing operations, and increases the likelihood of poor customer service. In many cases

good customers may become irate and take their business elsewhere if the desired product is not immediately available. Holding stocks and ordering costs will increase the performance of an organization. Cost reduction helps in preparing employees towards managing the inventory ideology and also in achieving profitability objective of Mutego distributors.

This was in conformity with the findings of Gary (1997) who asserts that open storage method creates an ease in finding the products stored, and is suited for storing items which are less costly and low valued items while closed storage systems is best suited for items which are high valued and having high risk to the environment and therefore only authorized personnel are allowed to operate.

As stated by Wade et al (2004), the resource-based view (RBV) says firms own supply of money, materials, staff and other assets, a branch of what allows the firms to attain the back-and-forth competition and a branch of those that pilot to higher-ranking long-standing performance. Based on the above findings, valuable resources are not only scarce but do usher in the formation of back-and-forth competition which might be conserved over a prolonged period of time to the length which the firm is capable to fight against imitation of resources, removal, or replacement.

Lastly, the study was in conformity with the findings of Hellen (1993) who stated that an enterprise's success can be greatly affected by the efficiency of its stores operations; efficient stores management can save money, help retain customers and maintain continuous operations; but stores mismanagement can lose an enterprise money, customers and production, proper internal coordination brings about Good inventory management solutions to save employees and partners time. Less time spent on managing inventory results in greater productivity for the organization.

5.2.2 Relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The findings revealed that organizational performance at Mutego distributors does not improve by material handling. It is revealed that material handling practices in the organization lead to reduction in wastes. Recognizing and keeping up the appropriate measure of stock is one of the greatest difficulties that inventory network chiefs confront. Stock sits as an exchange off between consumer loyalty and material accessibility and in addition expanding stock holding expenses and working capital. The parameters that are utilized for overseeing stock, for example, security stock amount, and renewal arrange amount, reorder point in a Continuous

Review strategy, or survey period in a Periodic Review approach utilize elements, for example, benefit levels, requests, and provider recharging lead times as contributions for their count.

In distribution companies, delays occur on a daily basis which results in ineffectiveness, inefficiencies, and poor performance of the products and its processes. One of the reasons could be the performance measures which are defined and optimized for the each unction within an organization but not for the entire value delivery process. In such cases, the main objective is to improve the communication between the company and other suppliers in terms of sharing methodology and information, and by designing the process in such a way so as to improve and to optimize the throughput, lead-time and cycle time. Moreover, it has been identified in the research work of Arunagiri et al (2013) that 80% of process delays are caused by 20% time trap. By focusing on that 20% the problem of material handling and total cost of acquisition, transportation and possession of goods and services can be reduced which creates benefit both to the buyer and seller. As a result, it provides a competitive advantage and improved profits.

These were in line with the literature review by Inman, (2009) who asserted that that materials account for more than 50% percent of the annual turnover in manufacturing firms. This shows clearly that priority should be given to management of materials in organizations to avoid unnecessary costs. Mutego distributors Ltd is facing competition in the current markets which has led to the need for coming up with better ways and strategies of managing material resources hence eliminating wastage in the value chain and thus enhancing organizational performance. When material isn't managed well, you can also wind up with overstock too much of certain items. Overstock comes with its own set of problems. The longer an item sits unsold in inventory, the greater the chance it will never sell at all, meaning you'll have to write it off, or at least discount it deeply. Products go out of style or become obsolete. Perishable items spoil. Items that linger in storage get damaged or stolen. And excessive material has to be stored, counted and handled, which can add ongoing costs.

Mohamed et al (2015) identified that lead time is a critical measure of a supply chain's performance which impacts both the customer satisfactions as well as the total cost of inventory and observed that almost one third of the materials orders were delivered later than the scheduled due date and concluded that the company have to re-valuate the supplier and consider the removal of supplier that are inconsistent in the delivery times.

The study was further in conformity with the findings of Bowersox et al (2002) who articulated that improvement in continuity of supplies with improved material handling will lead to

improvement in cooperation and will also enhance cooperation's and communications with reduced duplication of efforts, reduction in material costs and improvement in quality control, which are the main benefits of materials management

5.2.3 The relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The relationship between lead-time management practices and organizational performance was negative whereby delivery of products in the shortest time possible doesn't affect the performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd. Mutego Distributors supplies its products to its customers on specific days for example sodas are distributed in Mbarara town on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. However they don't supply the products early in the morning, sometimes products are distributed in the evenings but they still achieve the target sales due to the brands and the prices of their products which are relatively cheaper as compared to other distributors therefore lead time has got no impact on their sales growth and profitability for example Mutego Distributors Ltd sells its Mini Mirinda plastic sodas at Ugshs 10500 but other distributors sell it at Ugshs 11000. Due to this pricing some customers wait for Mutego Distributors Ltd to buy from them since it is cheaper compared to others whatever time they reach to them. Therefore the price you set affects your profit margin per unit sold, with higher prices giving you a higher profit per item if you don't lose sales. However, higher prices that lead to lower sales volumes can decrease, or wipe out, your profits, because your overhead costs per unit increase as you sell fewer units. So through this leadtime has got no relationship towards their performance but rather the price.

However, Bowersox et al (2002), articulated that improvement in continuity of supplies with reduced lead times, will lead to improvement in cooperation and will also enhance cooperation's and communications with reduced duplication of efforts, reduction in material costs and improvement in quality control, which are the main benefits of materials management

This was in conformity with the findings of Halachmi et al (2005) who asserts that reduced Lead Times can mean reduced inventory and more cash on hand for the businesses. In several aspects it means less risk, exposure and management of materials. Basing on the findings, businesses with outdated inventory management systems may rely on sales employees to project what will sell the next season. The purchasing department purchases merchandise based on the sales team's gut feeling instead of using a computerized forecasting system. Continued inaccurate assumptions could lead to a rise in obsolete inventory. Changing the inventory

system from uncertainty to accuracy with proper planning and automatic replenishing systems can diminish exposure to obsolescence.

It was further in conformity with the findings of Blackburn et al., (1992) who emphasized that today's customers around the globe demand a product as they want it, when they want it, and at the best possible price. In today's highly competitive global marketplace they are placing greater value on quality and delivery time. Providers of services similarly have begun to place more value on quality and delivery time and companies are trying to gain a competitive edge and improve profitability through cutting cost, increasing quality and improving delivery.

Finally, another way of using lead-time management to increase profitability involves creating demand by acquiring a limited quantity of a product. By offering a limited supply of items, the company creates an increased demand among consumers. Each customer wants to purchase the item before the company runs out. The company can charge a higher price for the item because of the higher demand. This increases the company's total sales thus improving profitability levels.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 The relationship between Storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study concludes that that storage management is a process that is continuous in the organization and therefore there is always need for managing inventory throughout using a certain technique good inventory management can lead to good performance in an organization. Storage management in an organization co-ordinates the purchasing, manufacturing and distribution functions to meet the marketing needs and ensures that organizations performance is in line with the set objectives and centres on customer satisfaction.

Finally, it can also be concluded that storage management challenges interfere with a company's profits and customer service. They cost an organization more money and lead to an excess of inventory overstock that is difficult to move. Storage management is one of the important key activities of any organization. It is important in logistics planning and control, production process, purchasing and satisfaction of customer services all of which are important in organizational performance and it helps organizations to meet higher than expected demand. This helps the organization to protect against running out of inventory.

5.3.2 Relationship between Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

In regards to material handling and performance, the study concluded that the companies good material management that is having multiple suppliers of various products and services, trying as much as possible to reduce variability, always having a smooth workflow in the organization, having proper queue control to avoid delays, expediting some processes to avoid delays, using multi modal transportation to avoid delays and offering warranty of the products/services for at least 12 months significantly affects performance positively. These are the relationships that had a strong negative effect on organizational performance; number of complaints, repeat customers, returned goods, warranty claims, customer feedback and after sale service.

5.3.3 The relationship between Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

From the findings, the study concluded that lead time management practice is not a very important competitive tool in organizations. However the pricing of your product mainly affects your performance as see in the discussion above. One might deliver very expensive products on time however another delivers very good and relatively cheaper products and still capture the highest sales volume because one of the most obvious affects pricing will have on your business is an increase or decrease in sales volume.

5.4 Recommendations

Since inventory management enhances organizational performance, there is need to improve on them in the following ways:

5.4.1 The relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study recommends that Mutego distributors should adopt proactive attitudes towards the issue of proper inventory management practices. Being proactive requires maintenance of the right level of inventory at any point in time. The organizations should avoid the dangers that are inherent in keeping too little or too much of stock. Management of Mutego distributors should closely monitor and manipulate their inventory system to maintain production consistency for organizational profitability and effectiveness.

5.4.2 The relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study recommends that the management of Mutego distributors should carry out control measures on stock as it is the case of cash by large firms. This is because stock represents cash and a substantial share of fund is invested in the firm's inventory. Mutego distributors should fully adopt lean inventory systems in inventory management as this will greatly improve the performance of the procurement function. Just-in-time systems should also be integrated by the firms. A good inventory system will help in preventing stock outs, overstocking, deterioration, obsolescence, and high carrying cost. The firms should make use of a sound inventory system for decision making in the procurement function and the company as a whole.

5.4.3 The relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd

The study recommends that there is need for the top management at Mutego distributors to adopt the use of information technology, that will not only help in information sharing, but also will help in hastening orders from suppliers hence shortening the lead time.

Further, the study recommends that management at Mutego distributors needs to form an expediting committee that will help in following up of orders with the suppliers hence delivering the products at the right time. Stores Department at Mutego distributors therefore should help in marketing, selling, promotion and even control of all types of materials for its quantity, quality and cost. The CEOs and other organization managers at Mutego distributors should strive to ensure good lead time management and good customer satisfaction. This will ensure that the organization environment is conducive for economic growth resulting to higher productivity in investment.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The researcher faced difficulty in finding the Mutego Distributors Ltd members in their offices since some of them would be gone for official duties. Another challenge was that only Mutego Distributors Ltd was subject to investigation; therefore the results of this research might not be conclusive in giving a general picture in all distributing companies. Lastly, the researcher felt that the interviews were subject to subjectivity as individuals may not have been fully open about some issues they felt were sensitive.

5.6 Contributions of the study

Mutego Distributors Ltd will be able to improve on its inventory management practices which will assist in achieving competitive results and there will also be an opportunity of revising its storage practices to improve on its performance. Finally, Mutego Distributors Ltd will know exactly what affects their performance and the solutions they need to apply. After management has put all the recommendations into practice, the sales will be improved and high levels of customer satisfaction and ultimately, more profitable levels. If Mutego Distributors Ltd starts recognizing and rewarding proper inventory management for their achievements, it will make them feel more appreciated and the company will go an extra mile.

5.7 Areas for Further Research

The researcher identified a number of study areas that need further investigation and these included the following;

Based on the findings of the study, further research has been recommended on more lead time practices that affect organizational performance other than the ones identified in the study.

Further studies should be considered to explore the drivers and the challenges of inventory management practices in organizations. This would be useful to understand the drivers that influence the embracement of inventory management practices and the challenges being faced by organizations who have embraced inventory management practices

REFERENCES

- Alp M. & John N. (2003) *Dynamic Leadtime Management in Supply Chains*. Graduate School of Business, Columbia University, New York.
- Amelia S. Carr, John N. Pearson (2002) "The impact of purchasing and supplier involvement on strategic purchasing and its impact on firm's performance", *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 22 Issue: 9, pp.1032-1053.
- Amin Abdulaziz (2005). "Aligning supply chain strategies with product uncertainties", *California Management Review*, Vol. 44 No.3, pp.105-19.
- Banjoko, S. A. (2000). *Production and Operations Management*, Lagos: Saban Publishers
- Barifaijo. B and Drury. A (2010) "Market orientation in vertical business networks", *Journal of Marketing Channels*, Vol. 14 No.3, pp.31-50.
- Barney, J. B (1991), "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage," *Journal of Management*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 108–09
- Basheka, B. C. and Bisangabasaija, G. (2010), "Relationships between inventory, sales and service in a retail chain store operation", *Management*, Vol. 31 No.2, pp.96-108.
- Bates, K.A. and Flynn, E.J. (1995), *Innovation history and competitive advantage: a resource based view analysis of manufacturing technology innovations*, *Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings*, pp. 235-9
- Bell, L., & Stukhart, G. (2007). *Attributes of Materials Management Systems*. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 112(1), 14-21.
- Boyne, George A. (2003). *Sources of public service improvement: A critical review and research agenda*. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 13 (3): 367-94.

Bozeman, Barry and Jeffrey D. Straussman. (1990). Public management strategies: Guidelines for managerial effectiveness. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Brigham F & Ehrhard E, (2005), Achieving World-class Supply Chain Alignment: Benefits, Barriers, and Bridges, National Association of Purchasing Management, Phoenix, AZ.

Bryson, John M., Fran Ackermann, Colin Eden. 2007. Putting the resource-based view of strategy and distinctive competencies to work in public organizations. Public Administration Review, 67 (4): 702-17.

Cagliano Linton, J.D. Klassen, R., & Jayaraman, V (2003).. (2007). Sustainable Supply Chains: An Introduction. Journal of Operations Management, 25(6), 1075-1082.

Chen F., (2005), "Customer relationship management: in B2C markets, often less is more", California Management Review, Vol. 44 No.3, pp.87-104.

Christensen, J., and C. Sachs. (1980). The impact of government size and number of administrative units on the quality of public service. Administrative Science Quarterly, 25 (1): 89-101.

Christopher, M. (2000). The agile supply chain competing in volatile markets, Industrial Marketing Management, Vol. 29 (1) pp. 37-44.

Corina , G. (2011), Determinants of Organizational Performance; The case of Romania

Coyle Waters (2008). "Arcs of integration: an international study of supply chain strategies", Journal of Operations Management, Vol. 19 No.2, pp.185-200.

Cummings, L. L., Huber, G. P., and Arendt, E. (1974). Effects of team size and spatial arrangements on group decision making. Academy of Management Journal, 17: 460-75.

David, F (2011) Materials Management Concept, Great Britain: McGraw Hills Education Ltd.

Dimitrios, V.A (2008) Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus across the Firm, 3rd ed., McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York, NY

Donovan Z, and Williams.A. (2003), Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus across the Firm, 3rd ed., McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York, NY.

Eltantawy, R.L (2005) "Is the Resource-Based 'View' a Useful Perspective for Strategic Management Research?" *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 26, No 1, pp 20-40

Fry, F. L., Stoner, C. R., and Hattwick, R. E. (2004). *Business: An integrative approach*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Fry, F. L., Stoner, C. R., and Hattwick, R. E. (2004). *Business: An integrative approach*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Garry R (1997), "Non-financial drivers of customer profitability in personal retail firming", *Journal of Targeting, Measurement & Analysis for Marketing*, Vol. 10 No.3, pp.233-48.

Gary j. Zenz (1997); *Purchasing and the management of materials* Florida state university, 7th edition, simultaneously, Canada, USA

Glisson, C. A. and P. Y. Martin. (1980). Productivity and efficiency in human service organizations as related to structure, size, and age. *Academy of Management Journal*, 23 (1): 21-37.

Goetschalck, M (2012), *Warehousing in global supply Chain: advanced models, tools and application for storage system*. London publication page 31-51.

Granovetter, Mark. (1985). Economic action and social structures: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91: 481–510.

Gupta , M. (2003) *Moving procurement systems to internet : the adoption and use of e procurement technologies models*: *South African Management Journal*

Halachmi, A., & Bouckart G. (2005); *Performance measurement, organizational technology and organizational technology and organizational design*. *Work Study*, 43 (3), 19-25.

Hansen, M. H., Perry, L. T. and Reese, C. S. (2004). A bayesian operationalization of the resource-based view. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25: 1279-95.

Hansen, M. H., Perry, L. T. and Reese, C. S. (2004). A bayesian operationalization of the resource-based view. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25: 1279-95.

Hitt, P. (2011) *Principles of warehousing design*. (3rd edition) Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in UK.

J. Kasthuri, S. Veerapandian, N. Rajendiran (2009) Biological synthesis of silver and gold nanoparticles using apiin as reducing agent *Colloids Surf. B: Biointerf.*, 68 (2009), pp. 55-60

Jader, J. (2012) *Lead Time Reduction: Improving the Customer's Service Experience*.

Kor, Y. Y. and Mahoney, J. T. (2000). Penrose's resource-based approach: The process and product of research creativity. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(1): 109-39.

Kothari, C.R. (2005) *Research Methodology. Methods and Techniques (Second Revised)*

Kothari, M. (2001), *Qualitative Research Methods*, 2nd edition by Mc Graw Hill Publishers , New york

Kraatz, M. S. and Zajac, E. J. (2001). How organizational resources affect strategic change and performance in turbulent environments: Theory and evidence. *Organization Science*, 12 (5): 632-57.

Krause, G. A. and Douglas, J. W. (2005). Institutional design versus reputational effects on bureaucratic performance: Evidence from U.S. government macroeconomic and fiscal projections. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 15: 281-306.

Kuncoro, K. (2005), "Making customer profitability work", *Firm Marketing*, Vol. 33 No.July/August, pp.80-5.

Lan, Z. and H. G. Rainey. (1992). Goals, rules, and effectiveness in public, private, and hybrid organizations: More evidence on frequent assertions about differences. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 2 (1): 5-28.

Lei, D, Slocum, J.W., & Pitts, R.A. (1999); *Designing Organizations for Competitive Advantage: The Power of Unlearning and Learning*. *Organizational Dynamics*, winter, 24-38.

Lysons S, Adeyemi L., Arnold, S. (2006), "Lessons learned from the world's best retailers", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 30 No.1, pp.562-70.

Mugenda M. O. and Mugenda A. (2003), *Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, African Centre for Technology Studies, Nairobi, Kenya.

Mutwol J. U (2013). *Effects of Efficient Materials Management on Performance of Firms in Food and Beverage Manufacturing Industry in Nigeria*, MBA Dissertation, Nigeria: ObafemiAwolowo University.

Nalubwama Agnes (2006), "Networks, resources, and small business growth: the experience in Sri Lanka", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 39 No.4, pp.363-71.

Ogbadu, E. E. (2009). Profitability through Effective Management of Materials. *Journal of Economics and International Finance*, 1(4), 99-105.

Ondiek, G. O. (2009). Assessment of Materials Management in the Kenyan Manufacturing Firms. Exploratory Survey of Manufacturing Firms Based in Nairobi. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 22(8), 88-110.

Oso B and Onen, H (2005) "Managing customer profitability: the 1, 2, 3s of an effective MCIF strategy", *Community Firmer*, Vol. 10 No. March, pp.36-9.

Oso H and FEARON, .E (2009), Historical evolution of purchasing functions; *Journal of Purchasing and Material Management* 25 71-81

Penrose, E. T. (1959). *The theory of the growth of the firm* (3rd ed). Oxford University Press: New York.

PMI. (2008). *A guide to a project management body of knowledge* (4th. ed.). The Project Management Institute. Newton Square, PA: PMI Publications.

Rainey, Hal G., and Paula Steinbauer. (1999). Galloping elephants: Developing elements of a theory of effective government organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 9 (1): 1–32.

Ramakrishna, R.V. (2005). Materials Management-profit centre; *Indian Institute of Materials Management Journal*, 8(6)75-83.

Ray, G., Barney, J. B., and Muhanna, W. A. (2004). Capabilities, business processes, and competitive advantage: Choosing the dependent variable in empirical tests of the resource-based view. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25 (1): 23-37

Roberts, P. W. and Dowling G. R. (1997). The value of a firm's corporate reputation: How reputation helps attain and sustain superior profitability. *Corporate Reputation Review*.

Ronald Ballow (1997); *business logistics management international edition*, prentice hall international inc, USA.

Russo, M.V. and Fouts, P.A. (1997). A resource-based perspective on corporate environmental performance and profitability. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40 (3): 534-59.

Saleemi, N.E. (2001), *Information Technology simplified*. Nairobi, Saleemi Publishers.

Sander Q,(2010) A conceptual model for assessing the impact of electronic procurement, *Africa Journal of Purchasing and supply chain Management* Vol.3

Sharma, O (2009). An automated model for materials management and Control, *Construction Management and Economics*, 24(6), 635-646.

SilverLeenders and Fearon S (1998); *purchasing and supply management 11th edition*, Rob Zunettler,

Song, J. Haas, C.T., & Caldas, C.H. (2006). Tracking the location of materials on construction job sites. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 132(9), 911-918.

Teece D. J., Pisano G, and Shuen A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(7): 509–33.

Tersine Dubelaar, (1982), "Relationships between inventory, sales and service in a retail chain store operation", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 31 No.2, pp.96-108.

Vanik, M. (2004) *Warehouse Management*, prentice Hall Publishers, New york.

Webster and Lucay O et al (2002). *Essentials of Educational and Social Science Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Nairobi Acts Press

Wernerfelt, B. (1984), "A Resource-based View of the Firm," *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol.5, pp.171-180

Whetten, David A. (1978). Coping with incompatible expectations: an integrated view of role conflict. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23 (2): 254-71.

Whybark, C.D and William, J.G. (1986). *Materials requirements Planning Under Certainty*. *Decision Science*, 7(1): 595-606.

Wilberforce F.J (2007), *General Managers in action: policies and strategies* New York: Oxford University Press.

Zineldin G (1995) *Materials Management Approach for small scale sector*, 2nd Ed., New York: Marcel Dekker Inc.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE APPENDICES

Appendix I: Research Questionnaire

A questionnaire to assess the impact of inventory management practices on the performance of Mutego Distributors LTD, Uganda

Dear respondent,

This is an academic research intended to assess the impact of inventory management practices on the performance of Mutego Distributors LTD, Uganda. The purpose of this study and its findings is purely academic. I kindly request for your assistance by sparing some of your precious time to answer the following questions. The study will take about 30 minutes only. I would appreciate your honest opinions. Be assured that your responses will be completely anonymous and therefore any information you provide in here will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Thank you

Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Tick where applicable

1. Gender

1. Female
2. Male

2. Marital status

1. Single
2. Married
3. Divorced
4. Widowed

3. Age

1. Below 20
2. 21-30
3. 31-40
4. 41 and above

4. Education level

- 1. Secondary
- 2. Diploma
- 3. Degree
- 4. Masters

5. Work experience:

- 1. Less than 1 year
- 2. 1 to 5 years
- 3. 5 to 10 years
- 4. above 10 years

6. Which department do you belong to?

- 1. Top management
- 2. Stores
- 3. Purchasing
- 4. Accounts

Please specify.....

For the following questions, please tick the number of your choice as indicated in the Key

1.Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3.Not Sure	4.Agree	5.Strongly Agree
---------------------	-------------	------------	---------	------------------

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE						
Section B: storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd						
1.	Inventory Management practices contribute greatly to the performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Inventory Management helps in inventory planning and scheduling in Mutego Distributors Ltd	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Procurement/purchase dates and quantities are improved by inventory management practices	1	2	3	4	5

4.	Cost reduction in Mutego Distributors Ltd is a result of inventory management practices	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Inventory Management helps in effective stores management of Mutego Distributors Ltd	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Internal coordination in Mutego Distributors Ltd can be improved by inventory management	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Improved customer service can be realized with inventory management	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Good management practices to inventory Management in Mutego Distributors Ltd	1	2	3	4	5
Section C: Materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd						
9.	Material handling practices in the organization lead to reduction in wastes	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Material handling practices in the organization lead to Reduction in production costs	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased product quality	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Material handling practices in the organization lead to Timely deliveries	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Material handling practices in the organization lead to Increased profitability	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Material handling practices in the organization lead to Reduced stock levels	1	2	3	4	5

15.	Material handling practices in the organization lead to Decreased production cycle times	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Material handling practices in the organization lead to System flexibility	1	2	3	4	5
Section D: Lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd						
17.	Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in inventories	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Shorter production cycle times	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduced obsolescence and surplus	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Reduction in materials cost	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Improvement in product quality	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased sales	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased profitability	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Lead time management practices in the organization lead to Increased customer satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Section E: Organizational performance

25.	My organization is growing faster.	1	2	3	4	5
-----	------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---

26.	My organization is more profitable.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	My organization is providing higher quality services.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	My organization is efficient in using resources.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	My organization is delivering orders quicker.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	In my organization, everything that matters to performance is explicitly reported.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	My organization has a large market share in Uganda	1	2	3	4	5
Thank you						

Appendix II: Interview Schedule

Dear respondent,

My name is KALIGIRWA RUTH, a student of Uganda Management Institute. Am conducting an academic research intended to assess the impact of inventory management practices on the performance of Mutego Distributors LTD, Uganda. The purpose of this study and its findings is purely academic. I kindly request for your assistance by sparing some of your precious time to respond to a number of questions pertaining the study. The study will take about 30 minutes only. All information provided will be handled and treated with utmost confidentiality.

Key Questions

1. Tell me about Mutego distributors?
2. On the overall, what is the organizational performance status of this organization?
3. Tell me about Inventory management practices adopted in your organization?
4. What is the relationship between storage management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd?
5. What is relationship between materials handling practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd?
6. What is the relationship between lead time management practices and performance of Mutego Distributors Ltd?
7. What strategies are being put in place to increase organizational performance at Mutego distributor?
8. Any other information?

Thank you.

END