

Women-Owned Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: An Empirical Review of Jos, Plateau State

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2026.11080066>

Received: 20 August 2026; Accepted: 27 August 2026; Published: 05 September 2026

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors that influence the recovery of women owned Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) located in Jos North, Jos South and Jos East Local Government Areas of Plateau state, Nigeria. The area has been confronted with periodic ethno-religious clashes since early 2000. Using Resource-Based View, Social Capital Theory and Institutional Economics Theory, this study established the effects of access to credit, business training received, social capital, years of trading experience, level of education and conflict intensity on the business recovery index and monthly revenue of the enterprises.

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted and 310 respondents were sampled from the three metropolitan Local Government Areas and their data analysed using descriptive statistic, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, independent samples t-test, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) multiple regression. The results revealed that access to credit, social capital and business training received were the most significant predictors of business recovery index accounting for approximately 94% of the variance in the index ($R^2 = 0.937$, $F(7, 302) = 641.06$, $p < 0.001$), along with the conflict intensity, while access to credit, social capital and business training accounted for 90% of the variance in monthly revenue ($R^2 = 0.903$, $F(7, 302) = 400.96$, $p < 0.001$). Enterprises with access to credit recorded a mean business recovery index of 7.41 compared to 4.77 for those without access ($p < 0.001$), and those with business training received scored higher (7.16) than those without (4.62) ($p < 0.001$).

The study also established that conflict intensity level had a negative significant relationship with business recovery index ($r = -0.743$, $p < 0.001$) and enterprises located in the highest bracket of conflict intensity were slowest to recover as indicated by their mean business recovery index of 4.02 compared to 7.02 for those in the lowest bracket. The study therefore recommends that provision of credit facilities, developing and promoting entrepreneurial skills as well as building the social networks of women entrepreneurs in the study area through credit guarantee schemes, training on business management and enterprise development and other supportive programs by relevant government agencies, non-governmental organizations and financial institutions will enhance their post conflict recovery.

Keywords: Women-Owned Msmes; Post-Conflict Recovery; Access to Credit; Social Capital; Entrepreneurial Training.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a pivotal role in generating employment, alleviating poverty levels, and creating wealth at the grassroots level in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria. A significant percentage of the local business owners are women who run their own business enterprises in trading and agro-processing, food services, tailoring, and petty trade in various locations. However, the situation of business ownership in Jos, the capital of the Plateau State, is significantly characterized by a combination of relative commercial and agricultural importance as the business hub of the North Central geopolitical region and frequent outbreaks of ethno-religious and communal conflicts that have, in many cases, adversely affected the business interests of these women in the past. The impacts of the intermittent unrest on the business activities of women-owned MSMEs in Jos North, Jos South, and Jos East Local Government Areas need further investigation to reveal their implication on the business recovery process.

There is no question that following periods of civil unrest, the process of restoring economic activity is influenced by a combination of personal, financial, and social factors that interact with the business environment to create varied post-conflict business recovery outcomes for proprietors. These factors are often different for women due to their low prevalence in trade organizations and local association membership, reduced share of income from businesses, and high levels of care-giving activities. The identification of women-specific elements for post-conflict business recovery in Jos will contribute immensely to the existing body of knowledge, especially for regions whose populations are predominantly female.

This study seeks to investigate the effect of the level of conflict impact on the business recovery of women-owned MSMEs in Jos. An analysis of the relationships between selected variables and the post-conflict business recovery outcomes was done using survey data collected from 310 respondents in Jos North, Jos South, and Jos East Local Government Areas. The associations between the studied variables and the business recovery outcomes were examined using SPSS version 25. The variables included age, gender, educational level, years in business, number of employees, access to credit, and source of credit, entrepreneurship training, and social networks. The dependent variables were a composite Recovery Index and monthly business revenue and costs.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the fact that there is recognition of the centrality of MSMEs to post conflict Plateau State's economic recovery, there exists little empirical investigations into the actual factors that drive recovery for Women entrepreneurs in Jos. Policies such as microcredit provision, skills acquisition and cooperatives are implemented in Jos with little understanding of the factors that most influence the economic recovery of Women entrepreneurs. Even though policies are aimed at addressing various needs of entrepreneurs (such as credit access, social networks and training), there is absence of empirical investigations of the relative importance of these factors in addition to the effect of conflict intensity, years of education, business experience and other human capital variables on post conflict economic recovery. Such information is critical towards ensuring that scarce resources are utilized efficiently by financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and government in promoting post conflict economic recovery. It is this lacuna the current study seeks to fill.

Objectives of the Study

In broad terms, this study aims to empirically assess the determinants of post-conflict economic recovery of women-owned MSMEs in Jos, Plateau state. More specifically, this study aims to:

- profile the ownerships, demographics of the women-owned MSMEs running throughout North, Jos South and Jos East local government areas;
- ascertain the impact of access to credit, social capital and entrepreneurship training on recovery of women-owned MSMEs;

- evaluate the influence of impact severity of conflict on recovery and income performance of women-owned MSMEs;
- assess how owner, firm and institutional-support variables together predict women-owned MSMEs Recovery Index and monthly sales income;
- compare recovery results on the basis of local government areas (LGAs), levels of education and bands of conflict-severity in order to facilitate regionally and demographically tailored policy measures.

Research Hypotheses

In line with the objectives above, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 5 percent level of significance:

- H01: There is no significant relation between access to credit and the Recovery Index of women-owned MSMEs in Jos
- H02: There is no significant relationship between social capital and the recovery of women-owned MSMEs in Jos
- H03: There is no significant relationship between participating in entrepreneurial training and the recovery of women-owned MSMEs in Jos.
- H04: There is no significant relationship between conflict impact severity and the recovery and revenue performance of women-owned MSMEs in Jos.
- H05: There is no significant difference in the Recovery Index of women-owned MSMEs in the three (3) Local Government areas of Jos North, South, and East Jos.

Significance of the Study

The implication of the findings of the study will benefit various stakeholders. To policymakers and the Plateau State Government, the findings will add empirical credibility to the design of conflict-sensitive MSME recovery interventions. To deposit money banks, microfinance institutions, and development finance partners, the findings will demonstrate the benefits of promoting access to credit for women entrepreneurs in conflict-affected communities. The findings will highlight the entrepreneurial training and social capital building roles for non-governmental organizations and donor agencies, respectively. Lastly, the findings contribute to the existing literature on gender, entrepreneurship, and post-conflict reconstruction in the North Central geopolitical region, an area whose research attention has been overshadowed by the Northeast conflict recovery discourse.

Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to women-owned MSMEs in the three (3) metropolitan Local Government Areas of Jos – Jos North, Jos South and Jos East using survey results from a cross-sectional study of 310 respondents. As with all cross-sectional studies, while the findings indicate associations, they do not establish causation. In addition, the measurements used for revenue and recovery are self-reported and may be subject to social-desirability bias. However, the number of respondents, respondent diversity in terms of the three Local Government Areas covered and the multiple statistical techniques applied increase the robustness of the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Women-Owned MSMEs

A women-owned MSME is typically defined as a MSME (micro, small, or medium enterprise) where a woman owns a majority stake and manages the enterprise on a daily basis. Nationally representative MSME surveys in Nigeria are revealing that women own a significant number of registered and informal micro-enterprises,

concentrated in trading, food processing, garment-making, and personal-services sub-sectors, and that women-owned enterprises tend to be smaller in scale, more commonly informally financed, and more reliant on personal or family savings than those owned by men. Such characteristics underlie both the potential vulnerability of women-owned MSMEs to conflict shocks and the channels through which they can recover from such shocks.

Post-Conflict Economic Recovery

Post-conflict economic recovery encompasses the process through which households, firms, and local economies restructure and re-engage in productive activities and rebuild their capacities and resources destroyed by war or conflict. Firms' post-conflict recovery typically involves resuming production or trading activities, restoring revenues to pre-war levels, rebuilding physical and financial assets, and re-establishing supply chains and customers. In this study, the authors conceptualized and operationalized firms' post-conflict recovery as a composite Recovery Index reflecting the proportion of sampled enterprises that have resumed operations and rebuilding their capacities since their latest conflict-related disruption.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View, associated with the work of Barney (1991), asserts that a firm's ability to perform consistently and compete effectively is derived from its bundle of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources - including financial, human, and organisational resources. When applied to post-conflict recovery, the RBV suggests that women-owned MSMEs with superior financial (access to credit), human (education, business experience), and organisational (employee strength) resources are more capable of withstanding the impact of conflict and recovering from it. This study draws on the RBV to justify the inclusion of access to credit, education, years in business, and employee count as predictors of recovery.

Social Capital Theory

The Social Capital Theory put forth in the works of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000) views the nexus of trust, reciprocity, and cooperation between individuals and groups as a productive resource in its own right. The networks of social relations in post-conflict settings take the form of trade associations, cooperative societies, religious groups, and informal savings networks (e.g., *esusu* or *ajo*) that serve as makeshift substitutes for the missing institutional infrastructure by providing emergency credit, disseminating market intelligence, and establishing protection mechanisms. This study operationalizes the concept of social capital through the Social Capital Score summarizing the extent to which respondents draw on such support networks.

Institutional Economics Theory

Institutional Economics theory, most closely associated with North (1990), highlights the role of formal and informal rules - property rights, contract enforcement, financial regulation, and social norms - in determining economic behaviour and outcomes. Weaknesses and asymmetries in the formal institutional environment (security, dispute resolution, access to formal finance) raise the salience of informal institutional practices in conflict-affected economies. This view underpins the selection of credit source (formal versus informal) and conflict impact severity as proxy indicators of the institutional context in which women entrepreneurs in Jos operate.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

A growing body of Nigerian and cross-country literature associates finance access with MSME recovery and resilience. Reports based on the Small Firm Diaries and National Bureau of Statistics data demonstrate that women-owned MSMEs in Nigeria access considerably lower average loan amounts than their male counterparts, and encounter significant barriers in digital finance adoption, despite representing a substantial proportion of the country's registered micro-enterprises. Development finance institutions have similarly highlighted that despite the dominance of women entrepreneurs in the ownership of small enterprises, they continue to encounter

disproportionate limitations in accessing capital, mentorship, and structured market opportunities, which impedes their potential for growth and shock absorption.

Studies conducted on conflict-affected communities in northern Nigeria demonstrate that structured, community-based interventions that integrate financial support with entrepreneurial training have a measurable positive impact on business resumption and household income recovery for women traders and producers. Such interventions typically combine elements of grants or low-interest credit with skills training, mentoring, and community stabilisation mechanisms, reflecting the Resource-Based View and Social Capital Theory's emphasis on the synergistic relationship between financial and social capital in facilitating business recovery. Complementary policy analyses of the Nigerian MSME sector more broadly highlight that implementing gender-disaggregated metrics for enterprise performance, and eliminating regulatory and financing bottlenecks, are critical factors in enabling women-led enterprises to act as key drivers of post-shock economic recovery.

Within Plateau State, the recurrent communal conflict in Jos metropolis since the early 2000s has resulted in a body of grey literature and situation reports that analyse the impact of the violence on market infrastructure, trader displacement, and the disruption of inter-communal trading networks. However, the existing literature base remains limited in terms of providing an in-depth, quantitative analysis of the factors affecting MSME recovery in this specific local context. This present study seeks to address this gap by applying multivariate statistical analysis to primary survey data collected directly from women entrepreneurs within the three metropolitan Local Government Areas of Jos.

Conceptual Model and Gap in Literature

From the examined theories and empirical studies, this study conceptualised the recovery index, and monthly revenue of women owned MSMEs as being jointly determined by a combined bundle of resources including, firm resources; education, years in business, employee count, financial-institutional resources; access to credit, credit source, relational resources; social capital, capability; training, and the externally imposed shock; conflict impact severity. Previous studies have evaluated the constructs separately or in combination with one another, but few have simultaneously modelled and evaluated their relative and combined predictive contribution in the context of women owned MSMEs within the Jos metropolis. This represents the gap in the literature that this study seeks to fill.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative cross-sectional survey methodology, which is best suited to examining the associations between owner/firm characteristics, institutional-support factors, and firm-level recovery outcomes at a single point in time.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of women owned MSMEs in Jos North, Jos South and Jos East Local Government Areas of Plateau State. From a total of 310 responses, almost an equal number of respondents were selected from each of the three Local Government Areas: Jos North ($n = 107$, 34.5%), Jos South ($n = 102$, 32.9%) and Jos East ($n = 101$, 32.6%) after cleaning the data. This would help compare the recovery performance of MSMEs at the Local Government Area level.

Data Source and Instrumentation

Primary data was collected using a structured survey instrument administered to women business owners. The instrument elicited information on owner demographics, including age, and educational level, firm characteristics, such as type of business, years the business was in operation, and number of employees, access to and sources of credit, a composite social capital score, participation in entrepreneurial or business skills training, a conflict impact severity rating, a composite Recovery Index, and monthly business revenue in Nigerian naira (NGN).

Measurement of Variables

Education level was coded on a three-point ordinal: (1 = basic/ no formal education, 2 = secondary, 3 = tertiary education). Business sector was classified into five categories that include trading/ retail, service, manufacturing/ production, agro-processing and fashion/ tailoring businesses. Access to credit was dichotomous (1 = has access, 0 = has not) with the credit source categorized as none, formal (deposit money banks or microfinance institutions), informal (cooperatives, esusu/ ajo groups, or family and friends) or other. Social capital was a four-point composite score (1 = very low to 4 = high), a reflection of the extent to which the respondent participates in trade associations, cooperative societies and networks of support. Received training was dichotomous (1 = yes, 0 = no). Conflict impact severity was a three-point ordinal (1 = low, 2 = moderate, 3 = high) indicator of the degree to which the business was affected in the last conflict episode. The primary dependent variable of this study, Recovery Index, is a composite score that ranges from 1 (minimal recovery) to 9 (full recovery), with monthly revenue in Nigerian naira.

Method of Data Analysis

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages, means and standard deviations), Pearson product-moment correlation to examine bivariate relationship among study variables, independent-samples t-tests to compare means of Recovery Index between dichotomous groups (access to credit, training status), one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare means of Recovery Index among Local Government Areas, levels of education and business sectors, and ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression to jointly estimate and examine the relative effect of level of education, years in business, number of employees, access to credit, social capital, training and conflict impact severity on the Recovery Index and monthly revenue. All hypothesis were tested at the 5 percent (0.05) level of statistical significance.

Results and Data Presentation

Demographic and Business Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic and business profile of the 310 women-owned MSMEs sampled across the three Local Government Areas of Jos metropolis.

Table 1: Demographic and Business Profile of Respondents (N = 310)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Local Government Area	Jos North	107	34.5
	Jos South	102	32.9
	Jos East	101	32.6
Owner Age	20-29 years	50	16.1
	30-39 years	110	35.5
	40-49 years	93	30.0
	50-59 years	57	18.4
Education Level	Basic/No formal education	52	16.8

	Secondary education	183	59.0
	Tertiary education	75	24.2
Business Sector	Trading/Retail	63	20.3
	Services	65	21.0
	Manufacturing/Production	61	19.7
	Agro-processing	62	20.0
	Fashion/Tailoring	59	19.0
Years in Business	2-5 years	53	17.1
	6-10 years	110	35.5
	11-15 years	49	15.8
	16-20 years	75	24.2
	21-24 years	23	7.4
Access to Credit	Has accessed credit	130	41.9
	Has not accessed credit	180	58.1
Credit Source	None	180	58.1
	Formal (bank/microfinance)	68	21.9
	Informal (cooperative/family)	60	19.4
	Other	2	0.6
Received Training	Yes	153	49.4
	No	157	50.6
Conflict Impact Severity	Low	114	36.8
	Moderate	115	37.1
	High	81	26.1

Social Capital Score	Low (1-2)	80	25.8
	Moderate (3)	162	52.3
	High (4)	68	21.9

Source: Field survey data, 2026 (n = 310).

The respondents were fairly experienced women entrepreneurs, with more than half (59.7%) having been in business for six years or more. The sample also comprised nearly equal numbers of respondents from each of the five sub-sectors of small-scale enterprises: trading, services, manufacturing, agro-processing and fashion/tailoring. Notably, more than half (58.1%) of the respondents indicated that they had not accessed any form of credit and slightly over half (50.6%) had never received training in running a business or enterprise, thus highlighting the extent of the deficits in addressing these women's financial and capacity needs.

Descriptive Statistics of Continuous Variables

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Key Continuous Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Owner Age (years)	39.76	9.10	20	59
Years in Business	11.50	5.91	2	24
Employees Count	3.32	1.79	1	10
Social Capital Score	2.96	0.79	1	4
Conflict Impact Severity	1.89	0.80	1	3
Recovery Index	5.87	1.55	1	9
Monthly Revenue (NGN)	234,192.90	73,351.17	128,000	412,000

Source: our computation from field survey data, 2026 (n = 310).

Correlation Analysis

Table 3 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients among the study's key variables.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variable	Recovery Index	Monthly Revenue
Owner Age	-0.522**	-0.527**

Education Level	0.603**	0.637**
Years in Business	-0.555**	-0.562**
Employees Count	0.435**	0.507**
Access to Credit	0.842**	0.859**
Social Capital Score	0.869**	0.842**
Received Training	0.823**	0.753**
Conflict Impact Severity	-0.743**	-0.665**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), n = 310. Source: our computation, 2026.

As shown in Table 3, access to credit ($r = 0.842$), social capital ($r = 0.869$), received training ($r = 0.823$) are highly correlated with the Recovery Index positively, whereas conflict impact severity ($r = -0.743$) and years in business ($r = -0.555$) carry strong, negative correlations with recovery. The negative correlation between years in business (and, by implication, owner age) is indicative of a disproportionately high concentration of long-established, older-owned enterprises in the sample areas and sectors most intensely affected by conflict, an issue addressed further in the discussion. All the correlation coefficients reported are significant at the 0.01 level.

Test of Hypotheses

Independent-Samples t-Test Results

Table 4: Independent-Samples t-Test - Recovery Index by Credit Access and Training Status

Grouping Variable	Group	n	Mean Index	Recovery	t-value	p-value
Access to Credit	Accessed credit (1)	130	7.41		28.08	< 0.001
	No credit access (0)	180	4.77			
Received Training	Trained (1)	153	7.16		25.38	< 0.001
	Not trained (0)	157	4.62			

Source: our computation, 2026. Equal variances not assumed (Welch's t-test).

H01 and H03 are both rejected. The results in Table 4 indicate that for women-owned MSMEs with access to credit, the mean Recovery Index is significantly higher (7.41) compared to those without access to credit (4.77), $t = 28.08$, $p < 0.001$.

Likewise, the result indicates that for trained business owners, the mean Recovery Index is significantly higher (7.16) compared to untrained owners (4.62), $t = 25.38$, $p < 0.001$. Therefore, credit access and participation in training programs have a significant association with recovery outcomes.

One-Way ANOVA Results

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA - Recovery Index by Local Government Area, Conflict Severity, and Education Level

Grouping Variable	Category	n	Mean Recovery Index	F-value	p-value
Local Government Area	Jos North	107	6.21	9.20	< 0.001
	Jos South	102	6.03		
	Jos East	101	5.36		
Conflict Impact Severity	Low	114	7.02	210.79	< 0.001
	Moderate	115	6.04		
	High	81	4.02		
Education Level	Basic/No formal	52	4.27	43.55*	< 0.001
	Secondary	183	5.78		
	Tertiary	75	7.21		
Business Sector	All 5 sectors	310	5.63 - 6.16	1.29	0.273 (ns)

Source: our computation, 2026. *F-value for education level computed separately. ns = not statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

H05 is rejected: Recovery Index varies significantly across the three Local Government Areas, $F(2, 307) = 9.20$, $p < 0.001$, with Jos East recording the lowest mean recovery (5.36) and Jos North the highest (6.21). H04 is rejected: conflict impact severity exerts a strong, statistically significant negative effect on recovery, $F(2, 307) = 210.79$, $p < 0.001$, with enterprises in the high-severity band recovering to less than 60 percent of the level achieved by low-severity enterprises.

Education level similarly exhibits a significant association with recovery, $F(2, 307) = 43.55$, $p < 0.001$, with tertiary-educated owners recording the highest mean Recovery Index (7.21). Business sector, however, demonstrates no statistically significant association with recovery ($F(4, 305) = 1.29$, $p = 0.273$), suggesting that recovery outcomes in this sample are governed more by resource access and conflict exposure than by the specific line of business.

Multiple Regression Analysis

In order to assess the collective and relative explanatory power of the study's independent variables, two ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models were estimated, one predicting the Recovery Index and the other, monthly revenue.

Table 6: OLS Regression Results - Determinants of Recovery Index and Monthly Revenue

Predictor	Recovery Index (β)	Recovery Index (p)	Monthly Revenue (β, NGN)	Monthly Revenue (p)
(Constant)	2.641	< 0.001	50,298.87	< 0.001
Education Level	-0.017	0.722 (ns)	5,667.63	0.040*
Years in Business	0.014	0.007**	-531.42	0.085 (ns)
Employees Count	-0.002	0.884 (ns)	5,142.86	< 0.001
Access to Credit	1.125	< 0.001	64,214.35	< 0.001
Social Capital Score	0.909	< 0.001	41,213.94	< 0.001
Received Training	0.835	< 0.001	18,350.18	< 0.001
Conflict Impact Severity	-0.244	< 0.001	1,723.37	0.566 (ns)

Source: ours computation, 2026. Recovery Index model: $R^2 = 0.937$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.936$, $F(7,302) = 641.06$, $p < 0.001$. Monthly Revenue model: $R^2 = 0.903$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.901$, $F(7,302) = 400.96$, $p < 0.001$. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, ns = not significant.

The regression results in Table 6 indicate that access to credit ($\beta = 1.125$, $p < 0.001$), social capital ($\beta = 0.909$, $p < 0.001$), and received training ($\beta = 0.835$, $p < 0.001$) were the strongest positive predictors of the Recovery Index, whilst conflict impact severity was a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -0.244$, $p < 0.001$). Years in business maintained a small but statistically significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.014$, $p = 0.007$) when controlling for other variables, whilst education level and employee count lost statistical significance in the model. Overall, the seven predictors explained 93.7 percent of the variance in the Recovery Index (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.936$), representing an extremely strong model fit.

In relation to monthly revenue, access to credit ($\beta = \text{NGN } 64,214$, $p < 0.0010$), social capital ($\beta = \text{NGN } 41,214$, $p < 0.0011$), and training ($\beta = \text{NGN } 18,350$, $p < 0.0012$) again emerged as the primary positive predictors, followed by employee count ($\beta = \text{NGN } 5,143$, $p < 0.0013$) and education level ($\beta = \text{NGN } 5,668$, $p < 0.0014$). The impact of conflict severity was not a statistically significant direct predictor of revenue when controlling for access to credit and social capital ($p < 0.0015$), suggesting that its indirect effects via credit access and social capital dwarf any potential direct contribution. The seven predictors together explained 90.3 percent of the variance in monthly revenue (Adjusted $p < 0.0016$).

H02 is rejected: Social capital is a significant, independent and positive determinant of both recovery and revenue post-conflict, even when controlling for credit access, training, and conflict severity, thus validating the relevance of Social Capital Theory to this study's findings.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study offer strong empirical support for the theoretical frameworks examined. As predicted by the Resource-Based View, the strongest overall impact comes from access to credit as a critical resource conferring power to recover and raise revenues, enabling women-owned MSMEs to replace destroyed inventory,

and buy additional goods to resume trading after conflict. The extent of recovery deficit (over 2.6-point difference in Recovery Index) between credit-linked and non-credit-linked enterprises is particularly striking, given corroborating national evidence on the disproportionate loan sizes and financial access challenges faced by women-owned MSMEs in Nigeria.

The significant independent impact of social capital on both outcome variables lends credence to the explanatory power of Social Capital Theory in the Jos post-conflict context. Women entrepreneurs belonging to cooperative societies, trade associations, and other forms of informal mutual-support networks, seem able to leverage these connections to mobilise emergency funds, obtain valuable market intelligence, and gain emotional and logistical support both during and in the aftermath of conflict events, an advantage that remains significant even after controlling for credit access. This finding fits within a broader body of evidence on the role of community-based support structures in facilitating livelihood recovery in conflict-affected communities in Nigeria.

The significantly positive impact of entrepreneurial training on both outcomes is consistent with its conceptualisation as a form of human capital in the Resource-Based View: the training seems to have equipped women entrepreneurs with essential record-keeping, customer-management, and other business skills that allowed them to resume operations and boost revenues more effectively than their untrained peers. This finding is consistent with other evidence on the importance of combined financial and entrepreneurial training interventions in post-conflict business recovery efforts in northern Nigeria.

The very strong negative impact of conflict intensity on recovery, combined with its relatively muted direct impact on revenues after controlling for credit and social capital, is consistent with the mediating role of institutional and relational resources emphasised by Institutional Economics Theory. Enterprises facing severe conflict impacts are not destined to permanent revenue reductions so long as they are able to leverage credit and social capital resources for recovery, suggesting that conflict intensity operates primarily as a suppressant of these critical resources rather than a direct determinant of revenue outcomes. This interpretation is supported by the significant negative correlations between conflict severity and both credit access and social capital scores observed in this study.

The significant Local Government Area differences, with Jos East scoring the lowest on average Recovery Index, suggest important spatial variations in either conflict exposure levels or in the availability of institutional and financial resources to support recovery, or both, across the Jos metropolis. The finding implies that a uniform approach to post-conflict recovery programming is unlikely to be optimal, and that a more nuanced geographic targeting strategy emphasising Jos East in particular would yield better results. The equally non-significant effect of business sector suggests that the availability of enabling resources is more important than the type of business activity pursued, an encouraging finding for policymakers considering cross-sectoral rather than sector-specific interventions.

Finally, the negative bivariate relationship between owner age/years in business and recovery that disappears upon inclusion of credit access, social capital, and training in the multivariate model suggests that older and more experienced entrepreneurs in this sample are not intrinsically less capable of recovering from conflict, but are instead disproportionately likely to belong to the un-banked, untrained segment of the population - a trend that reflects the recent proliferation of financial inclusion and skills-training initiatives targeting younger generations rather than any intrinsic disadvantage. This is an important nuance for policymakers to consider in designing interventions to promote post-conflict recovery among women entrepreneurs, as it suggests that outreach to older, longer-established women entrepreneurs on the availability and benefits of credit and training access could yield significant dividends.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

To identify determinants of post-conflict recovery of women-owned MSMEs in Jos, Plateau State the survey data collected on 310 women-owned MSMEs located within Jos North, South, and East LGAs are analysed. The results of our study reveal that access to credit, social capital, and entrepreneurship training are key drivers of

economic recovery. The composite regression that includes human-capital and firm-characteristics explanatory variables jointly account for greater than 90 percent of the variances of the Recovery Index and Monthly Sales.

While, the impact of conflict intensity on women's business economy only directly manifests through its negative impact on availability of credit and social capital and through indirect channels on monthly sales.

It also finds that owner's education, the local government of operation are very strong indicators of women's business economy. Business sector is irrelevant to it. Findings of this study validate the Resource-Based View, Social Capital Theory and Institutional Economics Theory in explaining post-conflict recovery and shed some lights to the policy makers to design effective policies in aiding the women's business recovery in Jos metropolis.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following policy and practice recommendations:

- The design of credit guarantee and social capital facilitation strategies particularly for women owned MSMEs in the Jos metropolis by both deposit money banks and microfinance institutions and government bodies of Plateau State is warranted considering the strong finding of Credit's impact on Recovery and revenue.
- The bolstering of trade association and cooperative facilities by development partners, non-governmental organisations and cooperatives; it has almost as strong a standalone impact on Recovery as social capital does on its own.
- Intensive provision of, particularly structured entrepreneurial skills/business training programs to women MSME entrepreneurs by the agencies/providers in charge of service delivery; higher impact is noted to be more associated with the very high number of owners of older, well-established women MSMEs, most of which have apparently not participated in these programs.
- Credit guarantee, social capital facilitation and skills/business training programs need to be channelled towards recovering the economy of Jos East (the local government with the smallest mean Recovery Index).
- The mechanism how the severity of conflict constrained the ability of women entrepreneurs to access formal and informal support needs to be fully understood and integrated into programs allowing for rapid provision of both credit as well as rapid strengthening of women's relationships networks instead of the separate provision of financial and relational support.
- The comparative framework should be broadened by extending this cross-sectional design to a panel survey, tracking the same entrepreneurs, alongside qualitative approaches to illuminate precisely how the impacts of conflict in different areas restrain the ability of women business owners to access support networks, both formal and informal.

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