



**FINANCIAL LITERACY AND MSME RESILIENCE: A POST-PANDEMIC STUDY OF  
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN LAGOS AND ONDO STATES, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed structural vulnerabilities within Nigeria's micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, with women-owned businesses disproportionately affected due to limited financial capacity, digital exclusion, and restricted access to formal support systems. This study examines the influence of financial literacy on the post-pandemic resilience of women-owned MSMEs in Lagos and Ondo States, Nigeria. Adopting a convergent mixed-methods design, data were collected from 400 women entrepreneurs using structured questionnaires, complemented by 12 in-depth interviews and 4 focus group discussions with key stakeholders. Financial literacy was conceptualized across dimensions including budgeting, saving, credit management, and digital finance, while resilience was measured through business survival, adaptation, and recovery indicators. Quantitative data were analyzed using regression techniques, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to provide contextual insights. Findings reveal that financial literacy significantly predicts MSME resilience ( $\beta = 0.57, p < 0.001$ ), with digitally literate entrepreneurs demonstrating higher adaptive capacity and recovery rates. The study also identifies key coping strategies such as savings mobilization, digital platform adoption, and participation in informal financial networks. However, disparities exist between urban and rural contexts, with women in Ondo State facing greater barriers to financial inclusion and digital adoption. The study concludes that financial literacy is a critical determinant of MSME resilience and recommends targeted financial education, gender-responsive financial inclusion policies, and digital capacity-building interventions. The findings contribute to advancing inclusive economic recovery strategies and provide practical insights for policymakers, development partners, and financial institutions.

**Keywords:** Financial literacy; MSMEs; Women entrepreneurs; Business resilience; Post-pandemic recovery; Financial inclusion; Nigeria

**1.0 Introduction**

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) remain central to economic development, particularly in emerging economies where they serve as engines of employment generation, poverty reduction, and inclusive growth. In Nigeria, MSMEs account for a substantial proportion of business activity and provide livelihoods for millions, with women playing a dominant role in sectors such as retail, agribusiness, food services, and informal trade (SMEDAN & NBS, 2022). Despite their economic significance, women-owned MSMEs face persistent structural constraints, including limited access to finance, weaker asset ownership, and socio-cultural barriers that restrict economic participation (World Bank, 2023; OECD, 2025). These challenges were significantly amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted supply chains, reduced demand, and exposed the fragility of small business ecosystems, particularly among women entrepreneurs operating in informal and semi-formal sectors.

The pandemic revealed deep vulnerabilities in the MSME landscape, with women-led enterprises disproportionately affected due to lower financial buffers, limited access to formal credit, and increased unpaid care responsibilities (UN Women, 2021; IFC, 2022). Evidence suggests that many women-owned businesses experienced income shocks, operational disruptions, and, in extreme cases, permanent closure, thereby widening existing gender inequalities in entrepreneurship. However, the post-pandemic period has also highlighted varying degrees of resilience among MSMEs, with some enterprises demonstrating adaptive capacity through innovation, diversification, and digital transformation, while others struggled to recover. This divergence underscores the importance of identifying key determinants of resilience, particularly those related to financial capability.

Financial literacy has emerged as a critical factor influencing entrepreneurial resilience and business sustainability. Broadly defined as the ability to understand and effectively apply financial concepts—including budgeting, saving, borrowing, investing, and risk management—financial literacy enhances decision-making and improves financial outcomes for individuals and firms (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014; OECD, 2020). Recent empirical studies show that financial literacy significantly improves access to finance, strengthens financial inclusion pathways, and enhances the performance of women-led MSMEs, particularly in developing economies (Kurniasari, 2026). Financially literate entrepreneurs are more likely to maintain proper financial records, manage cash flow effectively, and utilize formal financial services, thereby increasing their capacity to withstand economic shocks and sustain business operations (Atkinson & Messy, 2012; Maharana et al., 2024).

In the context of post-pandemic recovery, financial literacy plays an even more strategic role by enabling entrepreneurs to deploy adaptive coping mechanisms such as cost restructuring, savings mobilization, credit renegotiation, and digital financial adoption. Studies in Nigeria indicate that women entrepreneurs with higher levels of financial literacy are more likely to adopt resilience-enhancing strategies, including participation in savings groups, use of mobile banking platforms, and engagement with digital marketplaces (Oni et al., 2022). However, significant gender gaps persist in financial and digital literacy, with women entrepreneurs facing barriers related to access, trust, and technical skills, particularly in rural and underserved areas (FSD Africa, 2023).

Spatial disparities further complicate the relationship between financial literacy and MSME resilience in Nigeria. Lagos State, as a major commercial and financial hub, offers relatively

advanced financial infrastructure, higher digital penetration, and greater access to formal financial services. In contrast, Ondo State reflects the realities of semi-urban and rural enterprise environments, where financial exclusion, infrastructural limitations, and lower literacy levels constrain entrepreneurial growth (Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2022). These contextual differences provide a unique analytical lens for examining how financial literacy influences resilience across diverse economic settings and for identifying location-specific barriers and opportunities.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study is grounded in Human Capital Theory, which posits that knowledge and skills enhance productivity and economic performance (Becker, 1993), and Financial Capability Theory, which emphasizes the interaction between financial knowledge, access, and behaviour in achieving financial well-being and resilience (Sherraden, 2013). These frameworks collectively suggest that financial literacy is not merely an individual attribute but a strategic resource that enables entrepreneurs to navigate uncertainty, manage risks, and build sustainable enterprises.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of financial literacy, empirical research examining its role in shaping post-pandemic MSME resilience in Nigeria remains limited, particularly from a gender-sensitive and location-specific perspective. Existing studies often adopt aggregate or sector-specific approaches, thereby overlooking the nuanced experiences of women entrepreneurs operating in diverse socio-economic contexts (Ojo & Afolabi, 2021). Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence on how financial literacy interacts with digital adoption, informal financial systems, and coping strategies to influence resilience outcomes.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates the relationship between financial literacy and the post-pandemic resilience of women-owned MSMEs in Lagos and Ondo States, Nigeria. By integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study assesses financial literacy levels, evaluates their impact on business survival and recovery, identifies coping strategies adopted by women entrepreneurs, and examines regional disparities in financial behaviour and access. The study contributes to advancing knowledge on financial inclusion and MSME resilience while providing evidence-based recommendations for gender-responsive policies and capacity-building interventions aimed at fostering inclusive and sustainable economic recovery.

## 2.0 Literature Review

This study is grounded in **Human Capital Theory (HCT)** and **Financial Capability Theory (FCT)**, which together provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how financial knowledge and behaviour influence MSME resilience. Human Capital Theory posits that investments in knowledge, skills, and competencies enhance individual productivity and economic performance (Becker, 1993). Within the entrepreneurial context, financial literacy represents a critical component of human capital, enabling business owners to make informed financial decisions, manage risks, and optimize resource allocation (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). Empirical evidence suggests that entrepreneurs with higher levels of human capital are better positioned to adapt to external shocks and sustain business operations under uncertainty (Unger et al., 2011). Financial Capability Theory extends this perspective by emphasizing the interaction between financial knowledge, access to financial services, and financial behaviour in achieving economic

well-being and resilience (Sherraden, 2013). Unlike traditional literacy-focused models, FCT highlights that financial outcomes depend not only on knowledge but also on the ability to apply that knowledge within enabling institutional environments. In the context of MSMEs, financial capability encompasses budgeting, saving, credit management, and digital financial engagement, all of which are essential for navigating disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Xiao & Porto, 2017). The integration of HCT and FCT therefore provides a robust theoretical lens for examining how financial literacy and capability jointly influence business resilience among women entrepreneurs.

Financial literacy has been widely recognized as a key determinant of MSME performance and sustainability. It enhances entrepreneurs' ability to manage cash flow, evaluate investment opportunities, access credit, and maintain financial discipline (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014; OECD, 2020). In developing economies, where financial markets are often imperfect and informal financial practices are prevalent, financial literacy becomes even more critical for business survival and growth (Klapper et al., 2015). Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between financial literacy and MSME performance. For instance, Atkinson and Messy (2012) found that financially literate entrepreneurs are more likely to engage in effective budgeting, saving, and financial planning, leading to improved business outcomes. Similarly, recent studies indicate that financial literacy significantly enhances profitability, access to finance, and long-term sustainability of small enterprises (Maharana et al., 2024). In the Nigerian context, research has shown that entrepreneurs with higher financial literacy levels exhibit better financial management practices, including record-keeping, cost control, and credit utilization (Ojo & Afolabi, 2021). However, financial literacy levels remain uneven, particularly among women entrepreneurs operating in informal sectors. Structural barriers such as limited education, restricted access to financial information, and socio-cultural constraints often limit women's financial knowledge and decision-making capacity (World Bank, 2023). This disparity underscores the need for targeted financial education interventions to enhance MSME performance and resilience.

The relationship between financial literacy and business resilience has gained prominence in the wake of global crises, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic. Business resilience refers to the ability of firms to absorb shocks, adapt to changing conditions, and recover from disruptions (Doern et al., 2019). Financial literacy contributes to resilience by equipping entrepreneurs with the skills needed to manage uncertainty, maintain liquidity, and implement adaptive strategies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, financially literate entrepreneurs were more likely to adopt resilience-enhancing behaviours such as cost restructuring, savings mobilization, and diversification of income sources (OECD, 2020). Studies in emerging markets indicate that financial literacy significantly improves firms' ability to withstand economic shocks and sustain operations during crises (Fairlie, 2020). In Nigeria, Oni et al. (2022) found that women entrepreneurs with basic financial training were better able to navigate pandemic-related disruptions through the use of informal savings groups, mobile banking, and flexible credit arrangements. Despite these findings, resilience outcomes remain uneven across regions and sectors, suggesting that financial literacy alone may not be sufficient. Other factors, including access to financial services, digital infrastructure, and institutional support, interact with financial literacy to shape resilience outcomes. This highlights the importance of adopting a holistic approach that integrates financial capability with broader socio-economic factors.

Gender plays a significant role in shaping financial literacy and MSME resilience. Women entrepreneurs often face unique challenges, including limited access to formal finance, lower levels of financial education, and socio-cultural constraints that restrict economic participation (UN Women, 2021). These challenges are particularly pronounced in developing countries, where gender disparities in financial inclusion remain significant. Empirical evidence suggests that women-led MSMEs are more vulnerable to economic shocks due to their concentration in informal sectors and limited access to financial resources (IFC, 2022). However, financial literacy has been shown to mitigate these vulnerabilities by enhancing women's ability to manage finances, access credit, and adopt adaptive strategies. Studies indicate that financially literate women entrepreneurs are more likely to reinvest profits, diversify income sources, and build financial resilience (Klapper et al., 2015). In Nigeria, gender gaps in financial literacy and inclusion persist, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. Women entrepreneurs often rely on informal financial networks, such as rotating savings and credit associations, which provide limited access to capital and financial information (CBN, 2022). Addressing these disparities requires gender-responsive financial education programs and policies that promote inclusive access to financial services.

The increasing digitization of financial services has introduced a new dimension to financial literacy, often referred to as digital financial literacy. This involves the ability to use digital tools such as mobile banking, e-wallets, and online payment platforms to manage financial transactions (Xiao & Porto, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital financial services, making digital literacy a critical factor in MSME resilience. Studies have shown that digital financial literacy enhances business efficiency, reduces transaction costs, and expands market access, thereby improving resilience (Suri & Jack, 2016). However, significant gaps remain in digital adoption among women entrepreneurs, particularly in developing countries. According to FSD Africa (2023), less than 35% of women-owned MSMEs in Nigeria effectively utilize digital financial tools due to barriers such as limited awareness, trust issues, and lack of technical skills. Bridging the digital literacy gap is essential for enhancing MSME resilience and promoting financial inclusion. This requires targeted interventions that address both technological and socio-cultural barriers to digital adoption.

The impact of financial literacy on MSME resilience is influenced by regional and contextual factors, including infrastructure, access to financial services, and socio-economic conditions. In Nigeria, significant disparities exist between urban and rural areas, with urban centers such as Lagos benefiting from advanced financial infrastructure and higher levels of financial inclusion, while states like Ondo face challenges related to limited access and lower literacy levels (CBN, 2022). These disparities affect the ability of women entrepreneurs to access financial resources, adopt digital tools, and implement resilience strategies. Studies have shown that entrepreneurs in urban areas are more likely to benefit from financial literacy due to better access to financial institutions and information (Ojo & Afolabi, 2021). In contrast, rural entrepreneurs often rely on informal financial systems, which may limit their ability to scale and sustain their businesses.

Despite the growing body of literature on financial literacy and MSME performance, significant gaps remain in understanding its role in post-pandemic resilience, particularly among women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Existing studies often adopt aggregate approaches that overlook gender-specific and location-based differences, thereby limiting their relevance for policy and practice (Ojo & Afolabi, 2021). Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on how financial literacy

interacts with digital adoption, informal financial networks, and coping strategies to influence resilience outcomes. This study addresses these gaps by adopting a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of financial literacy and MSME resilience in Lagos and Ondo States. By incorporating Human Capital Theory and Financial Capability Theory, the study advances theoretical understanding while providing practical insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and development partners. It contributes to the design of gender-responsive financial inclusion strategies and supports efforts to build resilient MSME ecosystems in the post-pandemic era.

### 3.0 Methodology

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design integrated with PLS-SEM and multiple regression analysis to examine the effect of financial literacy on the post-pandemic resilience of women-owned MSMEs in Lagos and Ondo States, Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique was used: three LGAs were purposively selected per state, followed by stratified random sampling to obtain 400 women entrepreneurs across key sectors, ensuring adequacy for SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2022). Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from OECD (2020), measuring Financial Literacy (FL) (budgeting, saving, credit management, digital finance) and MSME Resilience (RES) (survival, adaptation, recovery), alongside Access to Finance (AF) and Digital Adoption (DA) as mediating variables, all on a 4-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using SPSS (v27) for descriptive statistics and regression, and SmartPLS 4 for SEM, with reliability and validity assessed via Cronbach’s alpha ( $\geq 0.70$ ), composite reliability ( $\geq 0.70$ ), AVE ( $\geq 0.50$ ), Fornell–Larcker criterion, and HTMT, while structural relationships (FL  $\rightarrow$  RES, FL  $\rightarrow$  AF, FL  $\rightarrow$  DA, AF  $\rightarrow$  RES, DA  $\rightarrow$  RES) and mediation effects were tested using bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) and model fit evaluated using SRMR ( $< 0.08$ ) (Hair et al., 2022; Kline, 2023). Qualitative data were obtained through 12 in-depth interviews and 4 FGDs with entrepreneurs and stakeholders, analyzed thematically using NVivo (Braun & Clarke, 2021), and integrated with quantitative results through triangulation. Ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality, were upheld, and robustness checks (VIF  $< 5$ , normality, sensitivity tests) ensured validity and generalizability.

### 4.0 Results and Discussion

**Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Constructs (n = 400)**

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Financial Literacy (FL)	3.05	0.64	1.80	4.00
Access to Finance (AF)	2.88	0.71	1.60	4.00
Digital Adoption (DA)	2.76	0.75	1.50	4.00
MSME Resilience (RES)	2.94	0.69	1.70	4.00

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics of the core constructs examined in this study. Financial Literacy (FL) recorded a moderately high mean score (M = 3.05), indicating that women entrepreneurs possess a reasonable level of basic financial knowledge, particularly in areas such as budgeting and savings. However, the relatively high standard deviation (0.64) suggests considerable variation in literacy levels across respondents, reflecting disparities in education,

exposure, and access to financial information between urban (Lagos) and semi-urban/rural (Ondo) contexts. Access to Finance (AF) and Digital Adoption (DA) recorded lower mean values ( $M = 2.88$  and  $2.76$ , respectively), indicating that despite moderate financial knowledge, many women entrepreneurs face constraints in accessing formal financial services and utilizing digital financial tools. This gap highlights a disconnect between financial knowledge and actual financial capability, consistent with Financial Capability Theory, which emphasizes the role of access and enabling environments. MSME Resilience (RES) recorded a mean of  $2.94$ , suggesting moderate resilience levels across the sample. While some businesses demonstrated adaptability and recovery, others remain vulnerable, indicating uneven post-pandemic recovery trajectories. The variation observed reinforces the need to examine the determinants of resilience more rigorously through inferential analysis.

**Table 4.2: Reliability and Validity Results**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
FL	0.88	0.91	0.66
AF	0.86	0.90	0.64
DA	0.87	0.91	0.67
RES	0.89	0.92	0.68

The results in Table 4.2 confirm that all constructs exhibit strong internal consistency and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha values range from  $0.86$  to  $0.89$ , exceeding the recommended threshold of  $0.70$ , indicating high reliability of the measurement scales. Composite reliability values above  $0.90$  further reinforce the robustness of the constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are all above  $0.50$ , confirming that the constructs explain more than half of the variance in their indicators. This demonstrates adequate convergent validity and supports the appropriateness of the measurement model. These findings validate the use of the selected constructs financial literacy, access to finance, digital adoption, and resilience for subsequent structural modelling and hypothesis testing. The strong measurement properties also indicate that the adapted OECD-based financial literacy scale is suitable for the Nigerian MSME context.

**Table 4.3: Structural Path Coefficients**

Path	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value	Decision
FL $\rightarrow$ RES	0.57	8.12	0.000	Supported
FL $\rightarrow$ AF	0.49	6.45	0.000	Supported
FL $\rightarrow$ DA	0.44	5.98	0.000	Supported
AF $\rightarrow$ RES	0.31	4.22	0.001	Supported
DA $\rightarrow$ RES	0.36	4.87	0.000	Supported
$R^2$ (RES) = 0.69				

The structural model results in Table 4.3 reveal that Financial Literacy (FL) has a strong and statistically significant direct effect on MSME Resilience (RES) ( $\beta = 0.57$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that financially literate women entrepreneurs are better equipped to sustain, adapt, and recover their businesses in the post-pandemic environment. This finding strongly supports Human Capital Theory, which posits that knowledge enhances productivity and performance outcomes. Financial

literacy also significantly influences Access to Finance ( $\beta = 0.49$ ) and Digital Adoption ( $\beta = 0.44$ ), suggesting that financially knowledgeable entrepreneurs are more likely to engage with formal financial systems and adopt digital tools. This reinforces the argument that financial literacy extends beyond knowledge to influence financial behaviour and capability. Both Access to Finance ( $\beta = 0.31$ ) and Digital Adoption ( $\beta = 0.36$ ) significantly affect MSME resilience, indicating that access to financial resources and digital tools enhances business adaptability and recovery. Notably, digital adoption exhibits a slightly stronger effect, highlighting the increasing importance of digital platforms in post-pandemic business environments. The  $R^2$  value of 0.69 indicates that the model explains 69% of the variance in MSME resilience, demonstrating strong explanatory power and confirming the relevance of the selected predictors.

**Table 4.4: Mediation Effects**

Path	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value	Mediation Type
FL → AF → RES	0.15	3.98	0.000	Partial Mediation
FL → DA → RES	0.16	4.21	0.000	Partial Mediation

The mediation results in Table 4.4 indicate that Access to Finance and Digital Adoption significantly mediate the relationship between Financial Literacy and MSME Resilience. The indirect effects ( $\beta = 0.15$  and  $0.16$ , respectively) are statistically significant, confirming that financial literacy enhances resilience not only directly but also indirectly through improved access to financial services and digital tools. The presence of partial mediation suggests that while financial literacy independently contributes to resilience, its impact is amplified when entrepreneurs are able to translate knowledge into actionable financial behaviours. This finding aligns with Financial Capability Theory, which emphasizes the importance of both knowledge and access in achieving financial outcomes.

**Table 4.5: Independent Sample t-test**

Variable	Lagos (Mean)	Ondo (Mean)	t-value	p-value
FL	3.22	2.89	4.85	0.000
AF	3.05	2.70	4.12	0.000
DA	2.98	2.54	5.33	0.000
RES	3.10	2.78	4.47	0.000

The results in Table 4.5 reveal statistically significant differences between Lagos and Ondo States across all variables. Women entrepreneurs in Lagos exhibit higher levels of financial literacy, access to finance, digital adoption, and resilience compared to their counterparts in Ondo State. These findings reflect structural disparities in financial infrastructure, digital access, and economic opportunities between urban and semi-urban/rural environments. The results underscore the importance of context-specific interventions and highlight the need for targeted policies to address regional inequalities in financial inclusion.

Qualitative findings provide deeper insights into the quantitative results. Participants reported that financial literacy enabled them to manage cash flow, avoid excessive debt, and identify alternative income sources during the pandemic. Many respondents highlighted the importance of informal savings groups and cooperative societies as critical support mechanisms. Digital adoption emerged

as a key resilience strategy, with entrepreneurs using social media platforms and mobile banking to sustain business operations. However, challenges such as limited digital skills, trust issues, and infrastructural constraints were more pronounced in Ondo State. These qualitative insights corroborate the quantitative findings and reinforce the importance of financial literacy and digital capability in enhancing MSME resilience. The findings demonstrate that financial literacy is a critical determinant of MSME resilience in the post-pandemic context. Its influence operates both directly and indirectly through access to finance and digital adoption, highlighting the multidimensional nature of financial capability. The study confirms that while knowledge is essential, its effectiveness depends on the availability of enabling environments that allow entrepreneurs to apply financial skills. The observed regional disparities further emphasize the need for inclusive and context-sensitive financial policies. These findings contribute to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the mechanisms through which financial literacy enhances resilience and by highlighting the importance of integrating financial education with broader financial inclusion and digital transformation strategies.

## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study provides robust empirical evidence on the role of financial literacy in enhancing the post-pandemic resilience of women-owned MSMEs in Lagos and Ondo States, Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods approach integrated with PLS-SEM and regression analysis, the findings demonstrate that financial literacy is a significant predictor of business resilience, influencing the ability of women entrepreneurs to sustain operations, adapt to disruptions, and recover from economic shocks. The results reveal that financially literate entrepreneurs are better positioned to manage cash flow, access financial resources, and adopt innovative coping strategies, including digital platforms and informal savings mechanisms. Importantly, the study establishes that the impact of financial literacy on resilience is both direct and indirect, operating through key mediating factors such as access to finance and digital adoption. This confirms that financial knowledge alone is insufficient unless supported by enabling systems that facilitate its practical application. The study also highlights significant regional disparities, with women entrepreneurs in Lagos exhibiting higher levels of financial literacy, financial access, digital adoption, and overall resilience compared to their counterparts in Ondo State. These differences reflect variations in infrastructure, financial ecosystem development, and access to information, underscoring the importance of context-specific interventions. The study contributes to the literature by integrating Human Capital Theory and Financial Capability Theory to explain MSME resilience and by providing empirical evidence on the mechanisms through which financial literacy enhances business sustainability in a post-crisis context. It further emphasizes that inclusive economic recovery requires targeted support for women entrepreneurs, particularly those operating in underserved and informal sectors.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Government agencies, financial institutions, and development partners should design and implement targeted financial literacy programs tailored to women-led MSMEs, focusing on practical skills such as budgeting, savings, credit management, and investment planning.
2. Financial institutions should develop gender-responsive financial products, including low-interest loans, microcredit schemes, and flexible repayment structures, to improve access to finance for women entrepreneurs, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas.

3. Capacity-building initiatives should be introduced to improve digital financial literacy among women entrepreneurs, enabling them to leverage mobile banking, e-commerce platforms, and digital payment systems for business growth and resilience.
4. Policymakers should prioritize infrastructure development and financial service expansion in underserved regions such as Ondo State to reduce disparities in financial inclusion and business resilience.
5. Informal financial mechanisms such as cooperative societies and rotating savings groups should be strengthened and integrated into formal financial systems to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability.
6. Financial literacy should be embedded within national and state-level MSME development strategies, ensuring that entrepreneurship support programs include financial education components.
7. Collaboration between government, fintech companies, NGOs, and financial institutions should be fostered to deliver scalable and innovative financial literacy and inclusion programs.
8. Policies aimed at MSME development should explicitly address gender-specific barriers, including limited mobility, access to information, and socio-cultural constraints that affect women entrepreneurs.

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