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Utilization of Knowledge Management as Business Resilience Strategy for Microentrepreneurs in Post-COVID-19 Economy

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Abstract: The COVID-19 outbreak affected the smooth operations of microentrepreneurs across the globe, including those in the Nigerian hospitality industry. However, it was discovered that the majority of microentrepreneurs were unable to utilize knowledge management to improve the resilience capacity of their businesses. It was this evidence that this study investigated regarding the effect of knowledge management on the business resilience of microentrepreneurs in Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey was used with a purposive sampling technique. This study found that knowledge management has a significant effect on the business resilience of microentrepreneurs. A sample size of 3018 was determined from the sample frame of 1520. This study concludes that knowledge management measured in terms of knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization has a significant effect on the business resilience of microentrepreneurs. One of the implications of this study is that microentrepreneurs should incorporate their experiences gathered during the COVID-19 era to strengthen the resilience of their businesses in the post-COVID-19 work economy.

Keywords: COVID-19; post-COVID-19; microentrepreneurs; knowledge management; business resilience; human capital

1. Introduction

Most microentrepreneurs across the globe were adversely affected by the unprecedented outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic [1–3]. However, COVID-19 (coronavirus), which was believed to have occurred in Wuhan, China and was subsequently declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, disrupted the operations of microenterprises, especially those in hospitality businesses across the globe [4,5]. It was revealed that immediately after the COVID-19 virus broke out, the governments of many nations commenced emergency safety measures, such as lockdowns, social distancing and handwashing, with the aim of curtailing the virus from spreading to their cities and communities [6]. It was also reported that, apart from the above-mentioned strategies, some countries around the world started the implementation of travel restrictions which forced many micro hospitality businesses to shut down operations [7,8]. Meanwhile, research has shown that, instead of acquiring relevant knowledge to tackle the pandemic, some managers of hospitality-based businesses started laying off their valued employees [9]. It was on this basis that [10]

elucidated that the sudden decision to downsize the workforce in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic by business owners, especially in the hospitality sector, was due to the lack of resilience knowledge.

Based on the foregoing, Boro [11] suggested that microentrepreneurs need to embrace resilience culture so that they can withstand disruptive circumstances that may negatively affect their operations in the future. Scholars contended that businesses that showcased resilience consciousness during the COVID-19 pandemic hold one of the major strengths and opportunities they have over their competitors [12]. Schwaiger, Zehrer and Braun [13] assert that microbusinesses that are resilient usually have the capacity to withstand disruptions orchestrated by government policies or other environmental forces. This assertion may be correct based on the prior evidence of service businesses' survival due to their resilient capacity in different parts of the world [10,12]. At this point, the authors will explain the meaning of business resilience, knowledge management and microentrepreneurs in the context of this study. Business resilience refers to the capacity of a system or an organization to absorb shocks, turbulences or disruptions from external sources and, thereafter, bounce back successfully without too much damage [9,12]. Knowledge management, on the one hand, is an organized process of acquiring, sharing, storing and the utilization of knowledge to achieve the predetermined goals of the organization [14]. Microentrepreneurs are individuals or entrepreneurs who launch, own and operate microbusinesses with no more than five employees with the aim of providing a market need [15–17]. Microentrepreneurs in the hospitality industry are proactive, dynamic, flexible and resilient, especially when it comes to decisions that would take their business to a higher level [18–20]. Considering the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality businesses across the world, it was shown that most microentrepreneurs were able to survive the tragedy as a result of their resilience consciousness [15,16,21,22]. Thus, the level of analysis in this study concerns microentrepreneurs that own and operate microbusinesses in southeastern parts of Nigeria.

However, Abuelkassem [23] is of the view that most micro hospitality businesses, such as restaurants, that spread their wings in different continents were successful as a result of resilience anchors that held them firmly against negative storms. Studies have shown that microbusinesses that are resilient triumphed during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of a high profit, retention of employees and sustainability, whereas those that do not possess resilience closed their businesses [7,13,23]. Yan-Kai [8] maintained that a resilient enterprise is one that anticipates for a crisis, builds a robust structure and plans for recovery. What this implies is that the survival of hospitality business microentrepreneurs in the post-COVID-19 economy is largely dependent on their resilience capacity to anticipate and overcome their challenges [12]. Again, the successes recorded by microentrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic can be attributed to their resilience capacities, which comprise capital resilience, cultural resilience and relationship resilience [15,24].

Nonetheless, Yasmina, Rahmanto and Naini [25] suggested that, in order to revamp micro hospitality businesses that were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, microentrepreneurs in the industry need to acquaint themselves with knowledge management strategies. Research has shown that knowledge management is very essential in hospitality business due to the constant changes in technology, culture and global economic policies [26]. Yaojie et al. [27] added that the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on micro hospitality businesses is a litmus test for microentrepreneurs, as well as other major policy-makers in the industry, thus the need for them to understand the relevance of knowledge management in preventing such tragedy in the future. In alliance with [26,27] contended that knowledge management is one of the binoculars through which micro hospitality businesses, such as restaurants, perceive their environment with the aim of identifying the menace that would have ravaged or dislocated their structures.

However, previous studies, such as [28–32], have investigated the impact, effect, relationship, influence and role of knowledge management on other criterion variables other than business resilience in the hospitality sector across the globe. These trends of thought

did not examine the utilization of knowledge management as a business resilience strategy for microentrepreneurs in the post-COVID-19 economy with a specific focus on microentrepreneurs in the hospitality industry of Nigeria using the human capital and self-efficacy theories. This has created a huge research gap which this study has filled. It was this huge research vacuum that motivated the researchers to embark on this study. Again, the choice of the micro hospitality business is based on its contribution to the growth and development of many countries in terms of job creation, community development and empowerment of individuals [23]. One of the major problems facing many micro hospitality businesses in the world, including in Nigeria, is their inability to adopt and implement knowledge management practices effectively [33–35]. Meanwhile, it was argued that the main reason why it seems very difficult to adopt knowledge management in micro hospitality businesses is because of the inadequate managerial skills to utilize the knowledge of employees for the prosperity of the organization [33,36]. To solve the problems mentioned above, Zvobgo, Chiviv and Maruf [37] advocated that human resource professionals or managers should motivate employees with useful knowledge, encourage knowledge sharing, remove any bureaucratic or leadership bottlenecks hindering knowledge acquisition and storage of meaningful knowledge and knowledge dissemination. On the other hand, it was reported that the adoption of knowledge management in hospitality businesses would open up new opportunities in tackling the challenges of globalization, improve customer service delivery, enhance innovation, curtail the high rate of employee turnover and enhance competitiveness in the industry [33,35,38,39]. Another study shows that the application of knowledge management in any hospitality business would assist managers and supervisors to gain positive insight into customer needs, competitors' pricing strategies and suppliers' desires [40]. With the above significance of knowledge management to hospitality businesses, it therefore implies that, through the findings and implications of this study, microentrepreneurs, managers, policymakers and hospitality professionals would appreciate the role of knowledge management on business resilience capacity for hospitality businesses in the post-COVID-19 economy.

Drawing from the above, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of knowledge management on the business resilience of microentrepreneurs in southern parts of Nigeria. In line with the purpose of the study, the following research questions were raised.

- (1) What is the significant effect of knowledge acquisition on capital resilience?
- (2) What is the significant effect of knowledge storage on cultural resilience?
- (3) What is the significant effect of knowledge sharing on relationship resilience?
- (4) What is the significant effect of knowledge utilization on strategic resilience?

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Knowledge Management (KM)

The underlining baseline theories that explain this study are human capital theory by [41] and self-efficacy by Bandura [42]. Prior study has shown that human capital consists of employee ability, knowledge, capacity, experience and skills [43]. Human capital in this study refers to skills, knowledge and the abilities of microentrepreneurs and their employees in the hospitality industry. In addition, microentrepreneurs can leverage the knowledge of their employees to improve the resilience capacity of their restaurants' businesses in the post-COVID-19 work environment. The premise of human capital theory, with regard to this study, is that employees or subordinates should be seen as the major assets that microentrepreneurs have to enhance the resilience capacity of their businesses in the post-COVID-19 work setting. On the other hand, self-efficacy theory holds that an individual (microentrepreneur) believes that he/she can achieve their goals, irrespective of the environmental turbulences [42]. In addition, research has shown that the success of microentrepreneurs all over the world is largely dependent on their self-efficacy [44,45]. In support of the above contention, [46] elucidated that microentrepreneurship resilience can be attained if microentrepreneurs are ready and willing to share the knowledge that was acquired during

the pandemic with their employees. This is the reason why [20,23] stressed that business environmental knowledge is significant to microentrepreneurship survival and resilience in the hospitality industry. Prior research has shown that microentrepreneurship resilience is built upon the framework of knowledge sharing [19]. Based on the above premise, [44] admitted that the resilience capacity of businesses can be enhanced through knowledge management that is anchored in knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization, which is made possible by the human capital in the organization. Nevertheless, knowledge management (KM) has been a major research interest amongst management and human resource professionals, quite apart from industrial scholars [47–51]. KM attracted much attention when Nonaka and Takeuchi [52] identified the significance of creating and utilizing knowledge by both micro, small and multinational businesses. Knowledge is viewed as a set of experiences and ideas possessed by an individual which such an individual uses to solve pressing problems in the workplace or at any geographical location. In Nonaka's writing, "*knowledge creating company*", knowledge was classified into two areas: explicit and tacit [52,53]. Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that is stored in databases, such as documents, newspapers, and magazines, that can be shared with other individuals who may be in need of it, while tacit knowledge is knowledge that is in the minds of individuals [53]. Attributes of tacit knowledge include experiences, observations and skills that an employee possesses [28,36]. Following the establishment of knowledge typology, the study affirms that knowledge management encompasses the ability of knowing something alone, whereas knowledge management is concerned with the processes of acquiring knowledge from sources of knowledge, storing the acquired knowledge into databases for future use, as well as sharing the acquired knowledge with colleagues to enhance the high performance of each stakeholder in the organization. In simple terms, Lee and Hidayat [47] viewed knowledge management as the process of acquiring knowledge that is relevant from an individual that possesses it to channeling it to where it is needed in order to enhance the prosperity of the organization. Martinez-Martinez et al. [54] assert that knowledge management is not just a process of acquiring knowledge from many sources but it is also an activity that organizations encourage to draw out hidden knowledge deposited in the minds of subordinates that is relevant to solving potential problems in the workplace.

In line with the above argument, Zayed et al. [55] assert that knowledge management is any activity that covers knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing and utilization for the betterment of the organization. In congruence with the above, Florini [26] opined that knowledge management is a management decision to alter strategic intent that does not conform to present realities. Chaturvedi and Singh [14] assert that the issue of knowledge management is due to the dynamic nature of the business environment. Thus, in order to overcome threats and weaknesses that surround the business operation, microentrepreneurs must be in conformity with the current trends of knowledge management in the workplace.

Previous empirical investigations on knowledge management across the globe are hereby presented. Hanmaikyur et al. [28] surveyed the effect of knowledge management on the competitive advantage of hotels in Benue State, Nigeria and discovered that knowledge management has a significant positive effect on competitive advantage. Mohamad and Fikry [29] examined the impact of knowledge management capabilities on market orientation in selected five-star hotels in Malaysia and their results revealed that knowledge management has a significant impact on the market orientation of the hotels. They suggested that the top-level management of a hotel business should focus on knowledge management capabilities that would strengthen their market competitiveness in the hospitality industry. Prompreing and Hu [30] investigated the effects of knowledge management on entrepreneur goal orientation in hospitality businesses operating in Chiang Mai, Thailand and found that knowledge management positively predicted entrepreneur goal orientation. Korir [31] investigated the antecedents of knowledge management enablers in the Kenyan hotel sector and found that knowledge management

propels the information base necessary for decision making in the hotel sector. Korir's [31] specific results found personal and social knowledge as the major knowledge management indicators that are useful in the hospitality industry. Personal knowledge is the useful knowledge that is held by an employee in the organization that can be learned by colleagues for the prosperity of the organization [31]. Personal knowledge, here, also refers to knowledge acquisition. Social knowledge, on the other hand, is the knowledge that is gained from external sources that could be gained when individuals share their experiences in the workplace [31]. Bormann [32] assessed the implementation of knowledge management systems in the attainment of hotel goals in Ghana and found that knowledge management plays a significant role in the keeping of both staff and guests' records for future references.

Nevertheless, scholars across the world validated knowledge management dimensions as knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing (distribution) and knowledge application (utilization), knowledge conversion and knowledge protection [56–58]. In line with the above, this study has adapted knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization as indicators of knowledge management, which is as a result of their validity and reliability in the prior study mentioned above. Knowledge acquisition refers to the process of generating new knowledge or ideas from subordinates in the workplace by encouraging them to make contributions or suggestions during meetings [40]. Knowledge storage is concerned with the process of preserving knowledge that was generated during work hours or meetings [56]. Knowledge sharing refers to ways through which acquired and stored knowledge are transferred to members of the organization for proper utilization in functional areas [58]. Knowledge utilization is the effective application of the shared knowledge in the areas where it is required [57].

2.2. Business Resilience

Resilience is the ability of a system to withstand shocks and bounce back without any loss of energy [59–61]. However, in the context of business, resilience is an organization's capacity to withstand external constraints [9]. Hanmaikyur et al. [28] added that the resilience capacity of a hospitality business is the ability to experience distortions within and outside its structures. Thus, for the hospitality business to withstand threats from the internal and external environment, it must possess a resilience culture [3,25]. In the words of [10], resilience consciousness is a new strategic nomenclature that managers are occupied with in the dynamic world of business. Thus, building 'resilience' into the business concept, Bhattacharya, Zutshi and Bavik [24] opined that business resilience refers to an organization's willingness and readiness to deploy sufficient resources that are necessary to withstand unforeseen circumstances that may occur in the future. Lai and Cai [62] went further to assert that business resilience is concerned with an enterprise proactiveness to stop negative forces from intruding into its functional areas. In contrast to the argument above, Edeh et al. [59] accentuate that business resilience is more than waging war with external forces; rather, it is the management's responsibility to protect the business from failing. On the other hand, Su et al. [12] affirmed that business resilience is the responsibility of all stakeholders that benefit from the organization.

Based on the foregoing, hospitality businesses' resilience is a collaborative effort from employees, managers, board of directors, housekeepers, front desk officers and other stakeholders. Business resilience cuts across all sectors of the hospitality industry, including transportation, accommodation (hotel), restaurants, lounge and entertainment [8,60]. Studies have shown that the disruptions of business activities by the recent global COVID-19 pandemic require that every hospitality business must be resilient and compliant to avoid being taken unaware by such unprecedented circumstances [7,24]. In line with the above contention, Yasmina, Rahmanto and Naini [25] argued that the essence of resilience in hospitality businesses is to adapt to the changing realities in the industry environment. Ditta-Apichai, Kattiyapornpong and Gretzel [15] added that service organizations such

as micro hospitality businesses must be conscious of environmental distortions that may disrupt their operations in the near future. On the one hand, Chen, Xie and Liu [44] maintained that business resilience that is measured with capital resilience, relationship (networking) resilience, cultural resilience, strategic resilience and learning resilience had been proven to prevent businesses from going into extinction. Other scholars had earlier demonstrated in their studies that business resilience dimensions that can be deployed by managers depend on the environment the organization is situated in [8,12]. Zhang, Bufquin and Lu [19] supported this argument by postulating that the business environment is a determinant factor for the success or failure of microentrepreneurs.

In light of the above, scholars had validated the measures of business resilience as: situation awareness, adaptability, adaptive capacity, innovation, creativity, staff engagement [59,60,63]; agility, robustness, management of vulnerabilities [61]; proaction, openness, authenticity [60]; recent crisis anticipation, organizational robustness, recoverability [64]; and capital resilience, relationship resilience, cultural resilience, strategic resilience, learning resilience [44]. Lai and Cai [62] contended that it is on record that business resilience does not have a singular or particular indices for its measurement, but it is the decision of scholars and practitioners to deploy any one of their choosing. In light of the above, this study adapted the validated and reliable measures of business resilience by Chen, Xie and Liu [44], which are capital resilience, cultural resilience, relationship resilience and strategic resilience. Capital resilience is microentrepreneurs' capacity to operate normally and recapitalize against any environmental disruptions. Relationship resilience refers to the cordial relationship that exists between microentrepreneurs and their subordinates which serves as their competitive advantage. Cultural resilience is a shared meaning held by microentrepreneurs and their employees which distinguishes them from other entrepreneurs. Strategic resilience, on the other hand, refers to microentrepreneurs' ability to maintain a strategic consistency in detecting unfavorable factors in the business environment. Drawing from the above, the study developed its research hypotheses using the aforementioned dimensions and measures of knowledge management and business resilience as shown hereunder.

2.3. Hypotheses Development

2.3.1. Knowledge Acquisition and Capital Resilience

Capital resilience is about recapitalizing on the COVID-19 pandemic challenges and coming out very strong after experiencing turbulence from the business environment. Mor et al. [18] discovered that microentrepreneurs that have sufficient capital are likely to survive in a turbulent business environment. Thus, building resilience capacity through the acquisition of necessary knowledge would enhance the chances of hospitality businesses to bounce back from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic [54]. It has been shown that resilience is action-centered, which implies that microentrepreneurs that owned the business are responsible for acquiring relevant knowledge that could enhance the functioning of the enterprise [36]. Acquiring knowledge depends on the willingness of microentrepreneurs of hospitality businesses to encourage their subordinates to contribute or suggest ways through which the business can be sustained without sending everyone home because of the pandemic [56]. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, some managers of hospitality businesses around the world did not consult their subordinates for solutions on what to do but most of them went ahead with downsizing their workforce [9]. Chaturvedi and Singh [14] maintained that downsizing is never the best option to avert government policies on lockdowns; rather, that the wisdom to save a business from extinction lies with the subordinates. Again, knowledge acquired from the pandemic experiences requires huge capital from microentrepreneurs to prevent a future occurrence. Thus, the knowledge to survive the COVID-19 pandemic can be acquired through conferences and workshops but it requires sufficient capital to be successful [56]. What this implies is that hospitality businesses need to be capital resilient to avoid the downsizing of its valued workforce. This is because downsizing has never helped any organization in the world;

rather, it is better to leverage on knowledge management to retain valued employees [51,58]. Therefore, the knowledge to survive in the post-COVID-19 pandemic could be discovered amongst the employees if microentrepreneurs are willing to ask questions of their subordinates. Li et al. [65] opined that building resilience is very important but capital should also be set aside to procure any equipment or technology gadgets that may be required to keep the business going. Based on the above contentions, the apriori expected outcome is that knowledge acquisition would predict the capital resilience of microentrepreneurs. It is against this backdrop that the first hypothesis is formulated.

H1. *Knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on capital resilience.*

2.3.2. Knowledge Storage and Cultural Resilience

Business culture is a shared meaning held by members of a particular organization which distinguishes them from other organizations [44]. The essence of cultural resilience is to promote the spirit of oneness which motivates employees to work in unity and harmony with the aim of fostering resilience for the organization [44]. Knowledge storage is a commitment that microentrepreneurs should encourage, especially when it comes to preserving an idea or suggestion that an employee shared, and it was found to solve an organizational problem. The above action can be achieved when microentrepreneurs of hospitality firms love and cherish the knowledge possessed by their subordinates. In line with the above, Lai and Cai [62] opined that resilience can be built if microentrepreneurs are ready to keep the knowledge that was used in time past to solve problems in databases or other storage devices. In addition, Su et al. [12] contended that cultural resilience is the major ingredient that service-oriented businesses require to remain steadfast in any challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Yan-Kai [8] asserts that resilience cannot be attained in any business if the workers are not following the culture establishing the enterprise. Thus, cultural resilience can be used to strengthen the overall resilience of the organization. Studies have shown that, in any business environment, workers are usually acquainted with philosophies guiding the business but, when it comes to resilience, it is microentrepreneurs' responsibility to mentor their employees with the required knowledge [13]. Adding a strong voice to the above, Yasmina, Rahmanto and Naini [25] accentuate that socializing employees on resilience is another culture that must be imbibed by every worker in the hospitality industry. Based on these postulations, Edeh et al. [56] submitted that knowledge storage would go a long way to strengthening the resilience capacity of micro hospitality businesses if microentrepreneurs are willing and ready to effectively implement it in their respective workplaces. Drawing from the above arguments, the second apriori expectation is that knowledge storage would have a strong positive effect on the cultural resilience of microentrepreneurs. From the above contentions, the second research hypothesis is hereby formulated.

H2. *Knowledge storage has a significant effect on cultural resilience.*

2.3.3. Knowledge Sharing and Relationship Resilience

Knowledge stored in databases, documents, office files and other sources must be shared amongst colleagues in the workplace for resilience to take place. This is the basis for which Boro [11] argued that any microentrepreneurs that do not encourage the sharing of knowledge amongst their workers have prepared for an exit from the business environment. On the other hand, relationship resilience is stimulated in the workplace as a result of the willingness to share knowledge that could solve business problems [1]. It was established that, where there is no collaboration in terms of knowledge exchange, the workers would engage in murmuring and complaining behavior [48,49]. Munasinghe et al. [66] concurred with the above submission and suggested that having a relationship with other microbusinesses that are in the same industry is a strategic positioning for other microbusinesses that want to be resilient. Building on this argument of hospitality businesses that are struggling

to surface from the shackles of the COVID-19 pandemic, Prasongthan [9] elucidated that knowledge sharing could salvage the impediments brought on by the pandemic and so managers of hospitality businesses must be ready to relate with their neighbors in the same industry. Meanwhile, scholars had advised that microentrepreneurs must be courteous in terms of the relationships they build with their counterparts with regards to finding out how they survived the COVID-19 pandemic because they may not provide them with accurate information [23,46,66]. Mor and Madan [67] added that microentrepreneurs' resilience capacity depends on their ability to face environmental disruptions and overcome the forces hindering their success through good relationships with stakeholders. To balance this argument, Florini [26] pointed out that hospitality organizations need knowledge management as an instrument to enhance their resilience metabolism. Following the submissions of the above-mentioned scholars, it is assumed that knowledge sharing would predict the relationship resilience of microentrepreneurs under investigation. It is against these contentions that the third hypothesis is hereby formulated.

H3. *Knowledge sharing has a significant effect on relationship resilience.*

2.3.4. Knowledge Utilization and Strategic Resilience

Strategic resilience helps microentrepreneurs to enhance their growth strategies and empowers them to pursue a robust growth model in the post-COVID-19 economy [44]. Thus, knowledge utilization is the last knowledge management process that aligns objectives with operational capabilities which complete the lifecycle of strategic implementation [49,50]. In light of the above, Lee and Hidayat [47] assert that acquired knowledge, stored and shared without appropriate utilization in the areas where they are needed, is as though there was no knowledge in the first instance. Schwaiger, Zehrer and Braun [13] opined that strategic resilience is a function of knowledge utilization. It is against this premise that Munasinghe et al. [66] accentuate that microentrepreneurs' success in the post-COVID-19 work economy largely depends on the utilization of shared or distributed knowledge amongst their employees. Meanwhile, Kiseli [48] and Ozigbo [58] contended that the essence of using knowledge management to ameliorate organizational challenges is for proper utilization. Going further, Mbuvi [50] maintained that knowledge utilization strengthens corporate, business and operational strategies formulated to achieve the stated goals by hospitality managers. Knowledge utilization improves the strategic positioning of microbusinesses in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic [56]. Therefore, strategic resilience can only be attained by microentrepreneurs if knowledge associated with distribution channels, customer demands and pricing is evenly utilized for organizational sustainability [1,7]. Based on the foregoing, the fourth apriori expectation of this study is that knowledge utilization would positively predict the strategic resilience of microentrepreneurs. Based on the above contentions, the fourth research hypothesis is hereby formulated.

H4. *Knowledge utilization has a significant effect on strategic resilience.*

Figure 1 below was conceptualized by the authors and it contains the measures of knowledge management and business resilience.

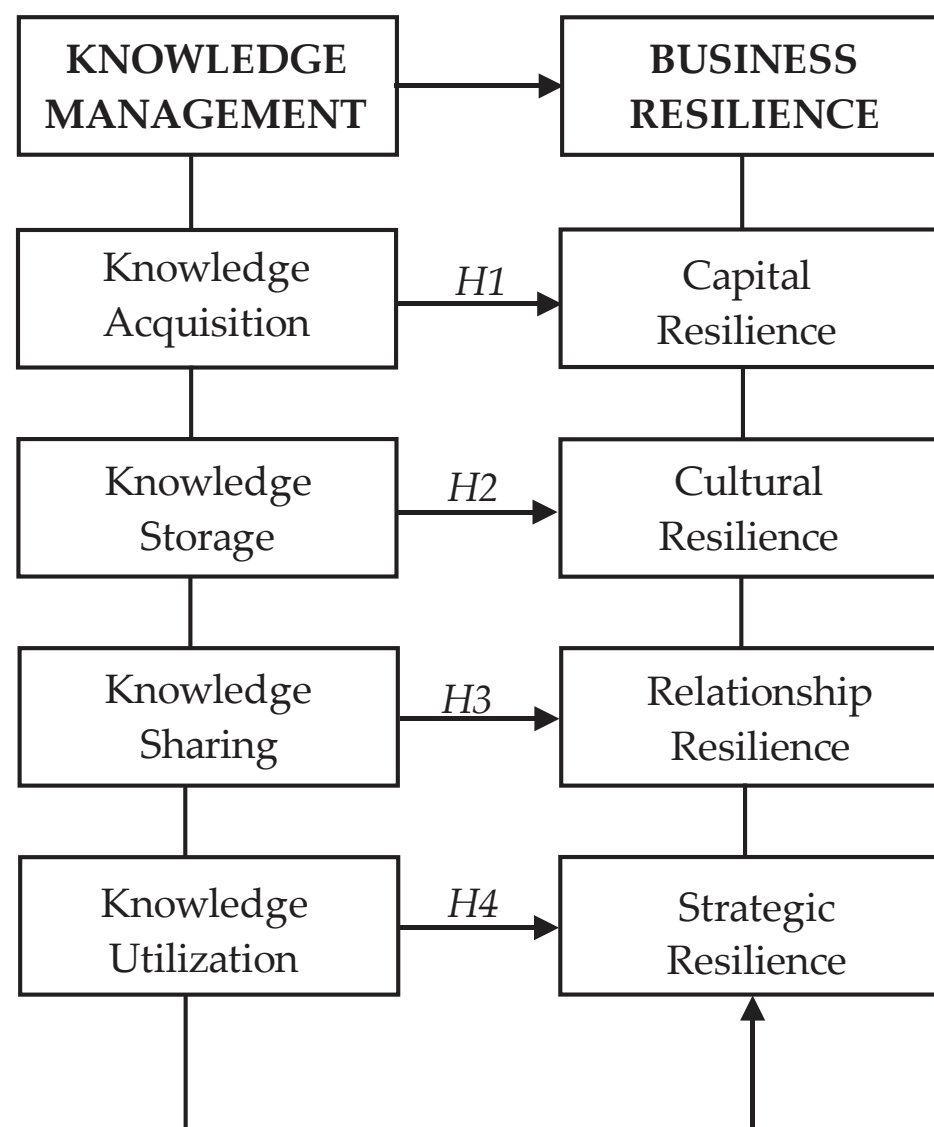


Figure 1. Authors' Research model.

3. Materials and Methods

This study employed a cross-sectional design that allowed the researchers to collect data from individuals, groups of organizations once and from specific geographical locations for the purpose of answering research questions [68,69]. Thus, the accessible sample frame for this study comprises 1520 microentrepreneurs that own and operate restaurant businesses in southern regions of Nigeria who were surveyed with a purposive sampling technique. A sample size of 308 was determined with [70] from the sample frame. A questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Microentrepreneurs were informed that their participation in the study would not harm them and that their personal information as well as their business names would not be mentioned in the study. Due to the busy schedule of the microentrepreneurs, they insisted that researchers should give them one month to complete the questionnaire. After one month, one of the representatives of the researchers in Nigeria went and retrieved the completed questionnaires. Thereafter, it was discovered that, out of the 308 copies of the questionnaire administered, only 279 were valid, implying that 29 copies were not properly filled, thereby making them invalid.

Measures and Analysis Technique

The Baytok, Soybali and Zorlu [40]-validated Knowledge Management Questionnaire (KMQ) in the hospitality sector containing knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge application was adapted. Knowledge management dimensions were measured with 20 items on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = very great extent, 2 = great extent, 3 = moderate extent, 4 = low extent, 5 = very low extent, see [40]). The above instrument was further affirmed to be reliable and valid to be used in the hospitality industry by Mohamad and Fikry [29], Ozigbo [58] and Rodrigues [71]. On the other hand, the Chen, Xie and Liu [44]—validated Business Resilience Questionnaire (BRQ) containing capital resilience, relationship resilience, cultural resilience and strategic resilience was adapted. The above dimensions were measured with 20 items on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = very great extent; 2 = great extent; 3 = moderate extent; 4 = low extent; 5 = very low extent, see [44]). However, the wordings in the questionnaire were modified to reflect the current investigation of microentrepreneurs' ability to utilize knowledge management as a business resilience strategy in a Nigerian work environment. Regarding the method of analysis in this study, researchers carried out only two major analyses, which were the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the research hypotheses. Thus, the demographic profiles of the participants were analyzed with frequency distribution while the formulated research hypotheses were analyzed with linear regression. An IBM statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 20.0) was used to execute the analysis. The linear regression estimated equation is constructed as: $BR(CAR, CU, RR, SR) = b_0 + b_1KA + b_2KS + b_3KSH + b_4KU + e$; where BR = business resilience, CA = capital resilience, CU = cultural resilience, RR = Relationship resilience, SR = Strategic resilience; b_0 —intercept, KA = knowledge acquisition, KS = knowledge storage, KSH = knowledge sharing, KU = knowledge utilization, and e = error of the estimate.

4. Results

The results in Table 1, below, show the demographic profiles of the participants. The results revealed that 157 respondents, representing 56.3%, are females, while 122 participants, representing 43.7%, are males. The age of the respondents shows that 64 participants, representing 22.9%, fall within 18–38 years; 156 respondents, representing 55.9%, fall within 39–48 years; and 59 participants, representing 21.1%, fall within 49 years and above. The educational level of the participants shows that 50 respondents, representing 17.9%, attended primary school; 113 participants, representing 40.5%, attended secondary school; 100 respondents, representing 35.8%, attended tertiary education; and 16 participants, representing 5.7%, attended other levels of education.

Table 1. Participants profile results.

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	157	56.3
Male	122	43.7
Age (Years)		
18–38	64	22.9
39–48	156	55.9
49&above	59	21.1
Education		
Primary	50	17.9
Secondary	113	40.5
Tertiary	100	35.8
Others	16	5.7

Source: authors' research.

Table 2, below, shows the results of the research hypotheses. From the results it was shown that the dimensions of knowledge management (knowledge acquisition; knowledge

storage; knowledge sharing; knowledge utilization) have a significant effect on business resilience indicators (capital resilience; cultural resilience; relationship resilience; strategic resilience). Specifically, the hypothesis one results revealed that knowledge acquisition has a significant positive effect on capital resilience (0.801^a). The hypothesis two results indicated that knowledge storage has a significant positive effect on cultural resilience (0.846^a). The hypothesis three results also indicated that knowledge sharing has a significant positive effect on relationship resilience (0.861^a) and the hypothesis four results revealed that knowledge utilization has a significant positive effect on strategic resilience (0.886^a). It was shown that the differences between R² and adjusted R² are less than 5% which means there is no sample error in the models. Secondly, the R² of the models revealed that 64%, 72%, 74% and 79% of the total variation in knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization can be explained by capital resilience, cultural resilience, relationship resilience and strategic resilience. Again, the Fstat calculated are greater than the tabulated (497.469, 698.685, 790.941, 1016.039 > 3.88) which indicates the rejection of the null hypotheses and acceptance of the alternate hypotheses.

Table 2. Hypotheses results.

R	0.801 ^a	0.846 ^a	0.861 ^a	0.886 ^a
R ²	0.642	0.716	0.741	0.786
Adjusted R ²	0.641	0.715	0.740	0.785
T-stat.	22.304	26.433	28.124	31.875
Fstat.	497.469	698.685	790.941	1016.039
Std. error	0.040	0.032	0.030	0.027
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
N	279	279	279	279
d.f	3.88	3.88	3.88	3.88

^a Predictor: Knowledge management; ^a Criterion: Business resilience; Source: authors' research.

5. Discussion

Based on the results of the research hypotheses in Table 2, above, this study found that knowledge management dimensions have a significant effect on business resilience in selected restaurant businesses in Nigeria. The apriori expectation for this study has shown that microentrepreneurs believe in their self-efficacy in dealing with the uncertainties in their business environment [16]. In addition, since the participants in this study are only microentrepreneurs, positive outcomes are expected. Drawing from the above contentions, the following specific research findings were discussed. The result of hypothesis one revealed that knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on capital resilience. This result corroborated with [28] findings which revealed that knowledge management dimensions (knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge application) have a significant positive effect on the competitive advantage in selected hospitality firms in Nigeria. In addition, [72] results also correspond with the first research hypothesis result, only that their accessible population is not microentrepreneurs but health workers. Their findings show that knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge sharing and knowledge storage have a significant impact on organizational resilience at Benha University Hospital in Egypt. The first results have demonstrated that knowledge associated with uncertainties is essential for the anticipation of future business disruptions that assisted microentrepreneurs to build capital resilience in the post-COVID-19 work environment. It is against this argument that [26] suggested that hospitality businesses can be sustained by acquiring relevant knowledge for survival during a crisis and utilize the same knowledge whenever they are faced with disruptions. [44], in their submission, suggested that businesses that want to build capital resilience should have a strong capital structure, constant flow of income and multiple sources of financing. It was also discovered that knowledge storage predicted cultural resilience. This finding is in congruence with [29] results, which indicated that a knowledge management indicator such as knowledge storage has a significant effect on the market orientation of hospitality businesses in Malaysia. Again, [73] findings supported

the result of research hypothesis one in terms of significance but differ with the participants and the industry where their study was investigated. Their results revealed that knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization correlated positively with business resilience in the manufacturing sector in Nigeria. However, prior research has shown that cultural resilience in businesses depends on managers' ability to cooperate with employees, quite apart from ensuring they have a sense of belonging that would stimulate their commitment to work [44]. In addition, knowledge that was acquired during the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to the cultural factors of the environment where businesses are situated can be used in the post-COVID-19 business environment to build resilience capacity. This is the main reason why [12] advised that owners of small hospitality businesses should document environmental experiences they had during a crisis and incorporate them into the socio-cultural factors when formulating resilience strategies. In line with the above, the third result revealed that knowledge sharing has a significant effect on relationship resilience. Relationship resilience was sustained by microentrepreneurs by creating unique value for their customers, sharing their achievements with their employees and building good relationships with the customers as well as the employees. This result is in line with [30] findings which show that knowledge sharing correlated positively with the goal orientation of entrepreneurs in Thailand hospitality firms. In support of the above result, [24,44] suggested that service-oriented businesses can develop a strong relationship resilience through knowledge sharing. Thus, the findings of this study have also demonstrated that microentrepreneurs' self-efficacy consciousness is a determinant factor for the pursuit of relationship resilience. Microentrepreneurs' relationship resilience is contained in their reciprocal relationship with customers and employees [18,23]. Another study that supported the third result of this study is [74], albeit the participants in their study are not microentrepreneurs. Their findings indicated that knowledge management dimensions, such as knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization, have a significant positive relationship with organizational resilience in selected healthcare providers in India. Lastly, the results from research hypothesis four revealed that knowledge utilization has a significant effect on strategic resilience. Strategic resilience was achieved by microentrepreneurs through the application of knowledge they acquired during COVID-19 pandemic experiences to improve efficiency, profit margin and customer satisfaction in the post-COVID-19 work setting. The result of research hypothesis four is consistent with [31] results which revealed that knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, knowledge storage and knowledge utilization have a significant effect on decision making in Kenyan hospitality enterprises. [75] results also corroborated the current findings, but the only difference is that their investigation was carried out in government-owned parastatals in Iran. Their findings revealed that knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization have a significant effect on enterprise resilience. Drawing from the above results, this study discovered that most of the previous knowledge management studies conducted in the hospitality industries supported the findings of this study. This is with the exception of studies carried out in other industries where the respondents in their studies are not microentrepreneurs.

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that knowledge management measured with knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization has a significant effect on the business resilience of microentrepreneurs. What this finding implies is that, when microentrepreneurs and hospitality business practitioners deploy knowledge management in all the functional areas of their operation, the resilience capacity would be built to withstand future disruptions that may be triggered by external environmental forces. Specifically, the findings from this study also revealed that an increase in knowledge acquisition would improve the capital resilience of hospitality businesses in Nigeria. This has affirmed that, when microentrepreneurs imbibed the spirit of acquiring new knowledge from their employees that is relevant to their businesses, they would boost the

resilience of the organization. It was also found that knowledge storage correlated with cultural resilience. Translating this finding into practicable evidence shows that, when microentrepreneurs and other managers of hospitality firms encourage their employees to keep vital information that assisted the organization to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic predicaments, such cultural resilience should be inculcated into the overall culture of the organization. Again, it was also found that knowledge sharing predicted relationship resilience. This simply means that microentrepreneurs and managers in the hospitality industry need to collaborate with competitors without allowing their rivals to leverage on their core competencies and intellectual capital. The last finding indicated that knowledge application predicted strategic resilience. This result demonstrated that microentrepreneurs and hospitality experts can improve the resilience of their business through the application of the right knowledge needed to provide a solution in every area of the business. Survival knowledge that was gathered during the COVID-19 pandemic work environment can be applied to strengthen the formulated strategies that can be altered to fit into the post-COVID-19 work economy.

Drawing from the conclusion above, the implication of this study is that microentrepreneurs should incorporate their experiences gathered during the COVID-19 era to strengthen the resilience of their business in the post-COVID-19 work economy. In addition, owners of restaurant businesses in Nigeria should acquire new knowledge from their employees by seeking their advice in challenging times. Policymakers in the hospitality industry should advocate for the utilization of knowledge management to enhance the business resilience of the hospitality industry. The findings of this study cannot be generalized since it was limited to microentrepreneurs that own restaurant businesses in Nigeria. The study is limited to a cross-sectional research design which is quite different from the longitudinal survey that supports long-term investigation. Another limitation of this study is the use of a quantitative methodology. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should employ methodological paradigm triangulation that will incorporate other statistical tools and software to fill the research gap in the methodology.

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