

A Conceptual Framework: An approach to Researching Micro-Finance Organisational Resilience in Nigeria

OSAREN EMOKPAE, PhD, DBA

The Visitor, Ed John College of Theology and Leadership studies, Lagos

ABSTRACT

This piece of work is the outcome of my six years of doctoral research into the Organizational Resilience of Microfinance Banks in Nigeria (2020). There has been little or no adequate attention given, in the literature, to the ability of Micro-Finance Banks to adapt to, cope with and/or overcome adversity in Lagos Nigeria. Also, missing in related literature were clear insights into how and why some MFBs are organizationally resilient, while others are not. Micro-Finance Banks are critical in the value chain of financial inclusion of poor people and their micro-enterprises in Nigeria. This paper is a rehash of the research methodology adopted, starting with the philosophical underpinning of the study. The governing philosophy to address the study was pragmatic realism, implicating abductive research approach. This resulted in mixed methods research design, based on a non-probability sampling technique that integrated purposeful sampling with snowballing. (Emokpae, 2020 & 2025).

KEY WORDS: Research, Philosophy, Ontology, Mixed Method, Micro-Finance

1. INTRODUCTION

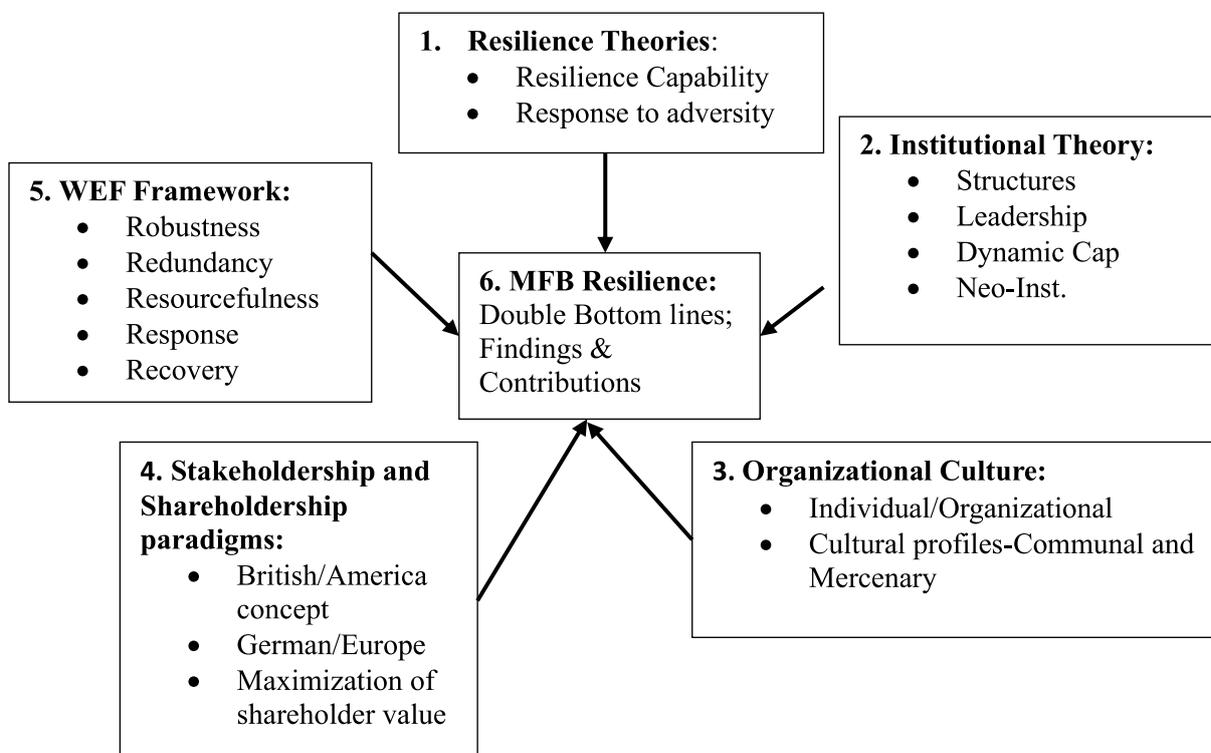
It is useful to amplify the overarching aim of the study. The research explored the issues surrounding the resilience of MFBs in Lagos with a view to making a contribution to the understanding of organizational resilience among MFBs domiciled particularly in Lagos Nigeria. In specific terms, the research sought to answer the research question: ‘How and why 69% MFBs survived while 31% did not in Lagos in nine years (2010 – 2018)’. Consequently, the study began by summarizing relevant literature, concepts and theoretical underpinnings. Furthermore, the materials were developed to help in identifying themes to anchor the research and lenses to discuss its findings; both intended to assist with answering the research question. Most of such themes were rendered explicit and drawn upon to discuss the findings, as the research progressed. In an exploratory study set out to gain understanding of how and why some MFBs are organizationally resilient and why others are not, necessitated identifying an appropriate conceptual framework to address the research, starting from defining concepts, delivering an extensive literature review; followed by a conceptual approach, that implicated the methodology.

A conceptual framework is “... a picture of the territory you want to study, not the study itself... a picture of what you think is going on with the phenomenon you are studying” (Maxwell, 1996:37). Miles and Huberman (1994:20) call it the “researcher’s map” of the territory to be studied; while Maxwell (2012) defines it as the lens that gives focus to the study. Weaver-Hart (1988) is of the view that a conceptual framework could in fact be a literature-based approach for organizing research ideas. In this case, a theoretical framework and a conceptual framework are essentially the same. However, a conceptual framework is also “a shared language for researchers to clarify, design, undertake and conclude their research” (Maxwell, 1996:25). It provides a reference point or strategy to identify the research question, to design the structure as well as the scope and shape of the research (Miles and Huberman 1994; Smyth 2000; Maxwell, 2005; Leshem, 2007; Cooksey and McDonalds, 2011 in Gagliardi, 2018 in Emokpae, 2025). It can emerge from a set of guiding principles and/or personal experience and can occur as a reflection on the theories around a particular research topic (Leshem and Trafford, 2007 in Gagliardi, 2018). This research merges Maxwell’s (1996), Cooksey et al (2011) and Trafford et al (2007) definitions to reach an appropriate governing framework for this study. The combination provided a simple but systematic way to undertake

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the research. Consequently, the conceptual framework adopted is graphically represented by Figure 1 below. Furthermore, the theoretical framework covers a synthesis of literature in the following areas in some detail: Resilience and Adversity, Culture and Organizational Culture, Stakeholdership and Shareholdership, Institutional theory (including neo-institutionalism), Ambidexterity, and Microfinance in local and international perspectives. These theoretical areas were brought together to provide a framework for the analysis of the data. Furthermore, Corporate Governance, applying the two competing models of shareholdership and stateholdership, was extensively examined, starting from their roots in Anglo-Saxon and German-mainland Europe respectively; and demonstration of how they impacted MFBs' organizational resilience.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework



The research began with defining the aim of the study and the key concepts used throughout the study. This was followed by a review of the literature on MFBs in Nigeria within historical, social and international contexts. The Andhra Pradesh MFI crisis in India was discussed as it offered lessons for the Nigerian MFBs' narrative, particularly with 40% of MFBs dying in 13 years. The issue of mission drift was discussed since it had become a challenge to MFBs in

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their attempts to meet both social and commercial goals at the same time. Relevant literature on organizational resilience was also reviewed, looking at both the proactive and reactive dimensions employed by organizations to stay alive when confronted by adversity or shock. The recent thinking on organizational resilience being canvassed by Professor Denyer was explored, as well, particularly as it relates to progressivity and defence. To investigate the role of stakeholders and regulatory institutions and practices in the lives of MFBs, literature on the debate on stakeholderhood versus shareholderhood was reviewed in corporate governance. The research went further to review the literature on institutional theory, as well as neoinstitutionalism; and so also was organizational culture.

In drilling down the literature review, the issues of stakeholder/shareholder interests and behaviour were mirrored against MFB organizational practices and organs to monitor and implement risk mitigation processes. The activities of institutions and practices within each MFB, including governance and culture were viewed critically. Neo institutionalism and what contribution it makes to MFBs' organizational resilience was also discussed, albeit briefly. Furthermore, the literary study discussed institutions like Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) and explored how they played a significant role in MFB resilience.

An exploration of the concept of ambidexterity was also done, including dynamic capabilities as they have the capacity not only to prosper the organization, but also for the MFB to withstand shock and adverse circumstances. After all, such capabilities provide the back-up systems and resources that the MFBs can draw upon during shock.

The works of Yunus (2003), Ulrike et al (2011), Wagenaar (2012) Schein (2010), Chowdhury (2009), Dopson (2010), Freeman et al (2001), Goffee and Jones (1996) Teece et al (1997), Copestake et. al (2005), Watson et al (2017), Howell and Nwanji (2007), Howell (2013), Dichter & Harper (2007), Acha (2012), Denyer (2017) and WEF(Riskviews,2013) were particularly helpful in shaping the literature review and setting the stage for the study.

In specific terms, the five components of organizational resilience espoused in WEF (Riskviews, 2013) were reviewed, showing their strengths and limitations. In terms of dealing with the limitations, the presence or absence of management control systems and compliance with prudential guidelines were seen as key. Also instrumental is sound governance. The discourse was critical to understand and explain how and why 69% of MFBs survived while

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31% failed in Lagos in the last nine years. Several themes emerged from the literature, key among which are highlighted below.

Firstly, poor enforcement of CBN regulatory and prudential guidelines. There appeared to be a consensus that monitoring and performance management – managing by measures – could be helpful for a healthy organizational practice (Emokpae, 2020).

Another theme is that Mission Drift (MD) is avoidable and that meeting both commercial and social goals is important to financial and operational sustainability; which is critical for organizational resilience. And that the pursuit of the interests of key players, owners and senior managers/leaders of MFBs impacts their capacity to withstand shock and adversity. The issue of fraud was a big theme that emerged in MFB's failure narrative. This theme suggested a serious need for significant improvement in corporate governance and strict implementation of control measures.

Another theme had to do with organizational proactivity and preparedness for adversity, which most MFBs in Nigeria, could ill afford due to their smallness in size and weak capital base. Both proactive and reactive measures seemed inadequate to protect many of the failed MFBs.

Organizational preparedness feeds into a broader theme of business model that came through in the literature review. The choice of interest rate and the adopted approach in credit administration, whether group driven or individual in nature, played a role in how organizations survive or succeed. Andhra Pradesh crisis was key in appreciating this emergent theme.

Another critical theme that emerged was that the failure of MFBs, globally, and in particular in Nigeria, could not be identified with a single cause. And that a combination of causes might be a more appropriate and sensible approach, as well as the degree of interaction between some, if not all of the causal factors, to be able to address the challenge of failure in MFBs in practical terms.

Finally, WEF (Riskview,2013), seemed to have captured the main issues in all the other literature reviewed particularly as concerning proactive capabilities required to confront adversity and win the battle; as well as the competences to react to emerging eventualities and shocks, like agility, flexibility and innovation combined with operationalizing institutional organs within and without every MFB in Lagos. Consequently, WEF became the primary

framework to discuss the findings, as it seemed to have anchored/captured the intersection of the key themes. That notwithstanding, other emergent themes were complementary to discuss and analyze the key findings.

In conclusion the conceptual framework for the study was rendered explicit and graphically demonstrated. This led to unveiling the core Research Methodology for the entire study, starting from the philosophical background to the study, the adopted mixed methods design underpinned by abductive approach, sampling and coding methods, as well as Critical Incidents framework.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1: Introduction

To conduct an academic research, the researcher must have and demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between theory and philosophy, and in particular with epistemology and ontology (Howell, 2013). How the relationships translate to the methodology adopted, chosen method and specific techniques of carrying out the research must also be acknowledged and clarified. Johnson et al (2013) and Creswell (2014) hold a similar view, and that admitting the philosophical assumption that underpins a research study in advance could be very helpful to the research journey. Creswell however adds that for an exploratory study that requires an inductive approach, care should be exercised in taking a position in advance on the philosophical background. Mixing methods, which impacts the overall methodology, in some cases may be the appropriate approach in addressing the research problem (Howell, 2004 in Emokpae, 2020). Mindful of the arguments on research methodology, the research was conducted in a systematic manner to achieve the goal of gaining understanding of MFB resilience.

The approach was also designed to make a contribution to bridging the gap in that field particularly as it relates to Lagos state Nigeria. In rendering explicit the philosophical background and epistemological commitment that underpin the study, an abductive approach was implicated. In conducting this study, it is important to clarify what ontology, epistemology and axiology mean. This is to ensure clarity and understanding of what the terms are.

2.2: Philosophical Background

The philosophical and epistemological assumptions that underpin the study touched on what Crotty (1998) calls the philosophical background and ontologies. Creswell (2014) argues that ontologies are philosophical claims, or thought systems about what knowledge is, and epistemology is about how we know what knowledge is. He further asserts that the values that comprise knowledge are called axiology and the way these are written about is called rhetoric. He also avers that the process of studying knowledge is methodology. And that when we are attempting to confirm what value goes into a study, it is in the realm of axiology. Similarly, when the debate is on how to write about it that is rhetoric. Finally, when it is the process of studying it, we enter into the realm of epistemology.

Johnson et al (2013), on the other hand, hold the view that the way we coordinate, and conduct management research is often conditioned by our epistemological commitment. They define epistemology as “the study of criteria by which we can know what does and does not constitute warranted or scientific knowledge” (Johnson et al, 2013:2-3). Using this definition, they provide a foundation to evaluate knowledge, indicating what is permissible. In this way, we are able to discriminate between warranted and unwarranted beliefs, what is rational from what is not, as well as differentiating between science and pseudo-science. Johnson et al (2013: 4), conclude that epistemology makes us more reflective, which “involves an attempt at self-comprehension through beginning to notice and then criticize our own pre-understandings in a more systematic fashion while trying to assess their impact upon how we engage ...” with our desired area of investigation. Furthermore, the philosophy of science has moved on from positivism to a broader frame of understanding, as well as knowledge, and defining science is still a highly contested field.

That notwithstanding, the researcher has had to lean heavily on Creswell (2014) in approaching the research methodology for this study, mindful of the consequences of that decision; one of which is the challenge of his epistemological commitment for the research, that can be challenged by positivist academics and researchers.

In designing a research proposal, Creswell considers four questions enunciated by Crotty (1998, in Creswell 2014). They are:

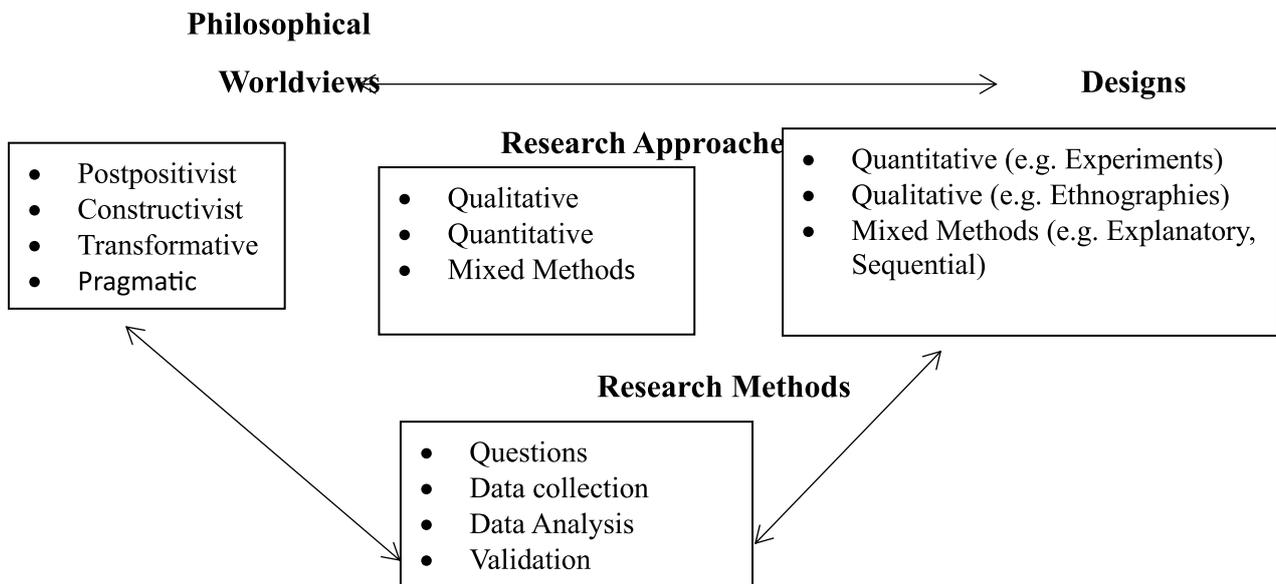
- What is epistemology and how does it inform the research, whether it is objectivism or subjectivism?

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- What theoretical or philosophical stance lies behind the methodology; for example, positivism, interpretivism or critical theory?
- What methodology governs our choice of methods - for example survey, experiment, or case study?
- What methods, that is, techniques and procedures, are chosen to execute the research? Examples could be questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, or discussion guides.

Creswell holds the view that answering those four questions produces an appropriate approach to tackle the research assignment “ranging from broad assumptions ... to the more practical decisions made about how to collect and analyze data” (Creswell, 2014: 10). The above is graphically represented in the diagram below:

Figure 2. Framework for Research—The Interconnection of Worldviews, Design, and Research Methods



Source: Adapted from Creswell, 2014

The above Research frame has been utilized to design the research approach that includes the assessment of knowledge claims, consideration of the strategy of enquiry and the identification of a specific method (Creswell, 2014). Creswell is of the view that the above process leads to the production of alternative knowledge claim positions as a first step, and subsequently to a choice of methods which could be either qualitative, quantitative or mixed. This process finally leads to the research design processes, components of which are data collection and analysis, writing-up and validation.

2.3: Epistemological Commitment

Whereas this study primarily contributes to the understanding of MFB resilience in general and Lagos State of Nigeria in particular, it is also about gathering information on, and drawing insight from the real-life practices of MFBs. This means that, although the study has to do with how multiple participants construct their understanding of the underlying story of organizational resilience in the industry, the researcher is also seeking to gain knowledge, and disseminate knowledge from the activities and actions of MFBs. As well as understanding practice, the study is underpinned by both historical and social interpretations of the different stakeholders including customers, workers, regulatory authorities, investors and the community in which the MFBs are located.

This process necessitates some understanding of the institutional practices, capacity and capabilities of the MFBs, the cultural and social settings in which they operate. Consequently, social constructivism becomes a relevant contributor to the underlying thought system for this study, which is pragmatic realism. Social constructivism has to do with socially enacted truth that is a product of what some individuals in society make of happenings around them as ‘participants’ (Creswell, 2014). This aligns with Crotty’s (1998) position which states that the meanings we receive are constructed by human beings as they engage daily with the world around them, as well as from their social and historical experiences. However, because the study is also real-world practice oriented, an epistemological orientation of pragmatic realism (as indicated earlier) underpins it. This means that it was problem-centred, whereby the problem of coping with and / or adapting to extreme events determined the method adopted. Consequently, it is worth emphasizing that the primary underlying philosophy or knowledge claim of this study is pragmatism, supported by constructivism. Both have therefore been intersected to provide a robust underlying foundation and framework for approaching the study.

Creswell opines that “for many, pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions” (Creswell, 2014: 11). Instead of focusing on methods, researchers tend to identify the research problem and use pluralistic approaches appropriate to countenancing the problem and understanding its nature and consequences. Mixing of methods could, in certain circumstances be a more appropriate way in addressing a research problem (Howell, 2004). In Creswell’s view, pragmatism provides a philosophical basis for a research as shown below:

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- Pragmatism does not commit to any one system of philosophy nor one reality. Thus, it tends to employ a mixed methods research design, whereby inquirers draw liberally from a range of different assumptions and methods.
- Individual researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that they consider appropriate for their purposes.
- Pragmatists do not see the world through one lens, or as an absolute unity. That explains why they commit to mixed methods for collecting and analyzing data rather than subscribing to only one way.
- “... pragmatist researchers consider '*what*' and '*how*' to research, based on the intended consequences and where they want to go with research. Mixed methods researchers need to establish a purpose for mixing methods; a rationale for the reasons why quantitative and qualitative data need to be mixed in the first place” (Creswell, 2014:11).
- They are in agreement that research always occurs “in social, historical, political, and other contexts”. Consequently, mixed methods studies may include a theoretical lens or even a transformative stance, reflective of social justice.

Creswell concludes that for the mixed methods researcher, “pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods”, with different assumptions, coupled with different forms of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014). This approach can be executed through abduction in pursuit of achieving the goals of the research.

2.4: Abductive Approach

According to Magnani (2001:17-18), “Abduction is the process of *inferring* certain facts and /or laws and hypotheses that render some sentences plausible, that *explain* or *discover* some (eventually new) phenomenon or observation; it is the process of reasoning in which explanatory hypotheses are formed and evaluated”. But Josephson (1994: 5) argues that “*Abduction, or inference to the best explanation, is a form of inference that goes from data describing something to a hypothesis that best explains or accounts for the data*”. He concluded that abduction is about theory formation, often a consequence of inference from interpreting phenomena.

Elaborating further, Kovács & Spens, (2005) cited in Mitchell (2018), noted that in taking an abductive approach to execute a research, the process begins with ‘surprising facts’ or ‘puzzles’; which are deployed to explain a situation. They added that “a researcher may encounter an empirical phenomenon that cannot be explained by the existing range of

theories” (Mitchel, 2018:5). What the researcher does is to identify the ‘best’ answer from among alternatives. This is done in order to explain the ‘surprising facts’ or ‘puzzles’ which were observed when the research began.

Similarly, Suddaby, (2006), cited in Saunder et al (2019) holds the view that rather than moving from theory to data (deductive) or theory being a consequence of data (induction), abduction moves back and forth. This way, it combines both deduction and induction. Many business and management researchers actually do their research this way. This is partly because abduction begins with the observation. The observation is often a ‘surprising fact’. From there he/she could try to explain the occurrence by adopting a plausible theory. That is exactly what this study entails. Starting this study by conducting secondary research and focus groups to observe the processes and practices in MFB industry, but already with prior knowledge of the general practices in the industry as a practitioner researcher, abduction was implicated. One “surprising fact” which the researcher observed and tried to explain in the study is the failure in 2010 of Integrated Microfinance bank (IMFB), a large national MFB, and the survival of small unit MFBs such as Asset Matrix and Emerald during the period.

Bradford (2017) argues that abductive reasoning underpins abductive research, which usually begins with incomplete set of observations. It precedes the possible explanation that could emerge from group observations. It is based on making hypotheses, and proceeds to testing the hypotheses using whatever information that is available. Bradford went further to state that abduction entails making an educated guess after observing a phenomenon for which there is no clear explanation. He used the following example to illustrate the point. If a person walks into a room and finds torn up papers all over the floor, with a dog alone in the room all day, the person could conclude that the dog tore up the papers. This is because it is the most likely explanation in the absence of any other information. But that explanation can be faulted by the subsequent “discovery” that, the person's sister may have brought a niece who tore the papers, or the papers may have in fact been torn by the landlord who visited. But because such information was not available when the person entered the room and found the dog alone in the room with torn papers, the dog theory becomes the more likely explanation. Bradford concluded that in the above circumstance “Abductive reasoning is useful for forming hypotheses to be tested” (Bradford, 2017:12).

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Comparing the deductive, inductive and abduction reasoning, *Life Lessons* (Critical Magazine, undated) states that: “*Deduction, induction, and abduction are like three parts of the same puzzle, and all formal reasoning is done using them and only them. Without abduction there is no hypothesis, without induction no testing, and without deduction no way to falsify; i.e. not only is there no logic or reason without these methods, there is no science (and essentially no philosophy)*”. Dudovskiy (2019) notes that abductive approach aligns with a pragmatic philosophy in a way to tackle the weaknesses in deductive as well as in inductive research paradigms.

According to Patokorpi (2006), the canonical example of abductive reasoning came from Charles Sanders Peirce logic thus:

Rule: All the beans from this bag are white

Result: These beans are white

Case: Therefore, these beans are from this bag

Patokorpi (2006) contends that the above logical inference may not deductively be valid. This is because the beans may have come from somewhere else. Consequently, he (Patokorpi, 2006:12) went ahead to argue that “abduction is the only inferential process that gives birth to new ideas, thus expanding our knowledge” and that “it is a ... process of finding or forming hypotheses or theories that might explain a (surprising) fact or an (unexpected) observation”. Yu, (2006) argues that whereas the logic of abduction and deduction assists in the conceptual understanding of a phenomenon, induction helps in providing empirical support for knowledge claim. He added that whereas deduction assists in proving something, what induction does is to express indication that something in fact occurred. Abduction on the other hand would suggest that something may or could have happened.

The above narration is all about seeking the best approach to study how and why certain phenomena occurred, namely failure and survival of MFBs. Most failed MFBs did not have very skilled managers. When one finds a failed MFB with preponderance of unskilled managers, one can hypothesize that the MFB failed because of unskilled work force. This attribution is a basis of abductive reasoning which is evident in the approach to this research. While adopting unskilled work force as plausible explanation of the MFB failure, the failure could in fact be due to a combination of factors beyond the attribution, which is a downside of abductive approach.

2.4. Strategy

A case study approach was implicated in this study with its advantage of the utilization of multiple sources of evidence as well as methods. The case study is about Organizational Resilience of MFBs in Lagos between 2010 and 2018.

The choice is because Lagos was the researcher's main location of practice. It was also the safest place in Nigeria at a time of serious banditry, kidnapping and insurgency in some parts of the country. Being chairman of the largest MFB in the country, safety concern was a key consideration for the choice of Lagos domiciled MFBs. Besides, not only were majority of Nigerian MFBs based and headquartered in Lagos, their branch network was also wider in Lagos than it is in the other 36 states and Abuja. Additionally, whereas Lagos constituted 12% of Nigerian population, it contained 19% of the number of MFBs in the country. Also, Lagos state contributed about 36% of the GDP in Nigeria.

As earlier identified, the MFBs in Lagos case study (between 2010-2018) was complemented by that of a case study of LAPO MFB to find out how and why it (LAPO) had remained the dominant and most resilient MFB in Lagos in particular, and Nigeria in general, in the last nine years. This was because LAPO exemplified organizational resilience and a model, whose experience other MFBs could learn from. There was also access to its financial and operational data (that other MFBs refused to provide), which became helpful in arriving at meaningful conclusions on critical resilience factors in MFB practice in Lagos, Nigeria.

Yin (1984:23) defines the case study research approach "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used". Yin (1984) divides case studies into three types, namely Exploratory, Descriptive and Explanatory. The exploratory type of case study was adopted because of the partly inductive and exploratory nature of this research (Crawford, 2013; Yin, 2004). Yin and Crawford argue that a case study has the advantage of providing answers when 'how' and 'why' questions are asked. They are usually about contemporary issues. These issues could be in areas where the researcher may have no control (Yin, 1989; Crawford, 2013; Emokpae, 2014). Furthermore, a case study can produce findings that are generalizable, although primarily these provide theoretical propositions (Yin, 1989). It can be used "to confirm, challenge or extend theory" (Crawford, 2013). A cross-case comparison has the additional advantage of

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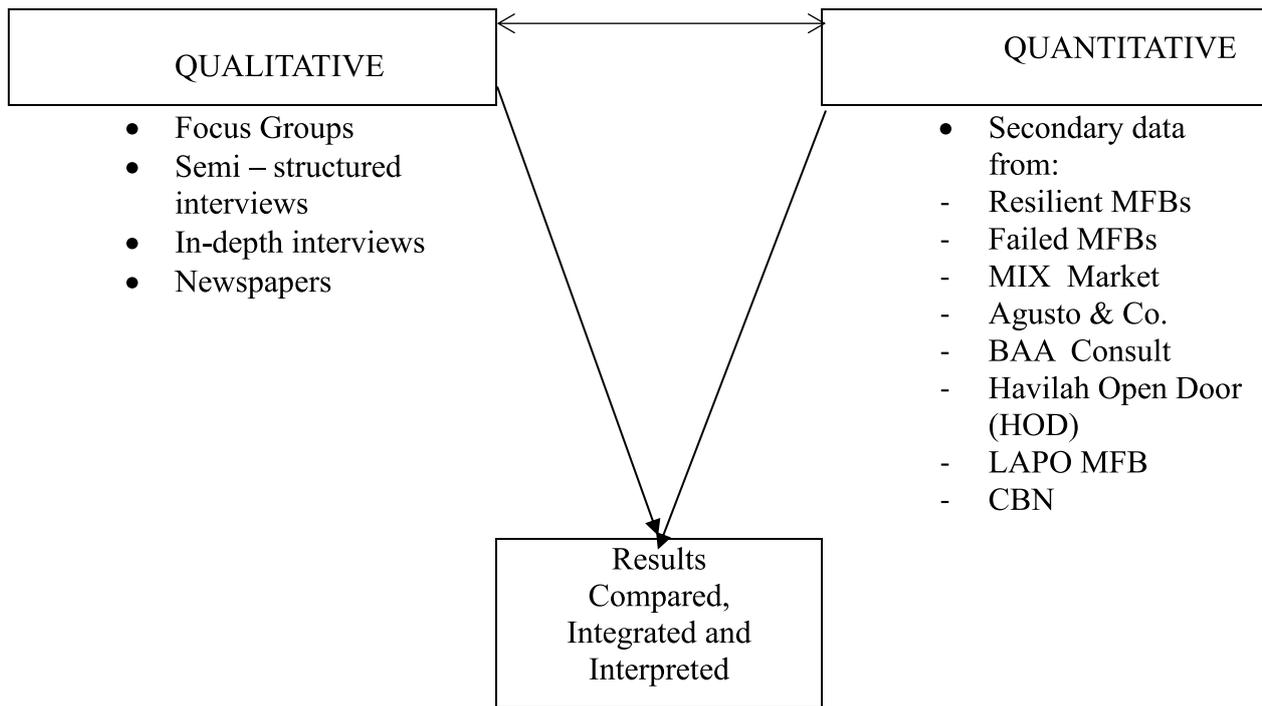
being “more potent if two or more cases support the same theory but do not support an equally plausible rival theory” (Yin, 1989 in Crawford, 2013:12). Creswell (2014), drawing from Stake (1995) is of the view that a case study is a situation “in which the researcher explores in depth a programme, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals.

The case is bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (Creswell, 2014:12). It also facilitates the use of multiple stages in data collection. This research chose to do a case study of MFBs in Lagos State of Nigeria, but situating it within national and international contexts and focusing on their practices and the consequences of such practices. The aim was to examine the impact of these practices on their ability to cope with, adapt to and/or overcome adverse situations. The most visible successful, resilient, MFBs were compared and contrasted with some of the failed ones whose data were accessible.

Starting with an analysis of the data gathered from focus groups employed to inductively identify key products and practices in MFB market in Nigeria, the research then reviewed the internal strategy documents of LAPO MFB to highlight how it has adapted its business strategy to the practices in the industry. At the same time, it examined MIX Market data to complement the data he had gathered from internal company resources. This review helped to identify possible alignments or contradictions of popularly held views in the relevant literature. Further, a critical evaluation of available secondary data from other sources was carried out, primarily from Agosto & Co. (Nigeria’s leading banks rating agency), BAA Consult (an important financial consulting organization) and leading newspapers such as Guardian, Punch, Telegraph and Vanguard.

Cascading the research process, three exploratory, qualitative studies were conducted to elicit the views of participants and the construction of their understanding or interpretation of the world around them. They were conducted one after the other to bridge identified data gaps from earlier stages of the study. Through this process, relevant and more robust data for the research were gathered. The data sources and triangulation are graphically demonstrated in Fig. 3 below:

Figure 3: Data Sources / Triangulation



3. RESEARCH METHOD:

Mixed methods, albeit embedded, were used for this study. This involved the collection of both qualitative and secondary quantitative data, partly simultaneously and partly sequentially from the sources indicated in Figure 2.2. The choice of the mixed methods approach over survey was based mainly on the latter’s inflexibility and rigidity. The response shallowness and subjectivity as well as its susceptibility to biases such as halo, primacy and recency effects also contributed to the choice (Lavrakas, 2008). Survey is also weak in engaging in research in an area that is largely fresh and unexplored; that requires firstly understanding issues that are germane in the subject area.

Creswell (2014:18) argues that a mixed methods approach “is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds... it employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems”. It pulls the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods together, thereby minimizing the weaknesses of using either. Martinez (2013) argues that ‘qualitative research design has been shown to be particularly suited to analyzing dynamic, interactive processes within different operations and management control systems’. A qualitative approach is

appropriate for exploring the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of resilience, particularly when the perception and perspectives of the participants in the MFB industry are involved. A quantitative approach on other hand is an empirical investigation using statistics and mathematical techniques. This is particularly useful to establish relationships. This is also a situation where one variable determines the other with results that are more generalizable.

The sequential exploratory procedure, in which qualitative data is collected and analyzed first before quantitative data is collected and analyzed, was the researcher's preference over the concurrent procedure. The former provided an opportunity to identify data gaps after using one method. The gap was then filled using the second method. At a pragmatic level, however, both qualitative and quantitative data available had to be gathered. Thereafter, three streams of qualitative research were undertaken sequentially. The first involved interviewing respondents representing all types of stakeholders in the industry. Second, interviews were undertaken with five leaders in the MFB industry and lastly, interviews were carried out with the cooperation of some of the directors of the dominant and arguably most resilient MFB in the industry.

3.1. Sequential Exploratory Design:

In this study the quantitative data gathered at the beginning of the study was reinforced as the study progressed. There was also a hint of the transformative approach as the theoretical lenses of institutional theory and stakeholder theory were useful in framing the interview discussion guide and design. This also helped in the analysis and discussion of research findings. Furthermore, auto-ethnography was drawn upon, in expressing the researcher’s experience in the industry. In this case, he was interviewed by a competent colleague. The WEF (Riskviews, 2013) components with their roots in both theories (of Institutional and Stakeholder) and strategic analysis espoused by Prahalad and Hamel (1990), as well as the literature on fraudulence, were primarily used to discuss and evaluate findings in the discussion section of the research paper. WEF (Riskviews,2013) somewhat captured the key themes in the literature review like business model, capital base, governance practices and leadership, manpower and so on; as significant contributors to the narrative on organizational resilience.

3.2: Sampling Technique

It is usually very difficult if not impractical to study a whole population, so a sampling method is often adopted. “Sampling is the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or

a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. In sampling, population units such as people, cases and pieces of data are selected. To draw conclusions about populations from samples, one must use inferential statistics, to enable us to determine a population's characteristics by directly observing only a portion (or sample) of the population" (Baran, et al, 2016:15). There are different sampling techniques from which a researcher can choose, subdivided into two main groups:

- (i) Probability sampling
- (ii) Non-probability sampling

"Probability sampling is a method of sampling that utilizes some form of *random selection*. In order to have a random selection method, you must set up some process or procedure that assures that the different units in your population have equal probabilities of being chosen" (Trochim, 2020:2).

Non-probability sampling methods do not start with a complete sampling frame, but with what is available. They tend to be cheaper and more convenient.

They are particularly useful for exploratory research and hypothesis generation, and therefore particularly suited to this study which is exploratory. The study, after all set out to gain some understanding of the nature of organizational resilience among MFBs in Lagos.

3.3: Non-Probability Sampling Methods

There are four main types of non-probability sampling: purposeful sampling, quota sampling, judgment sampling and snowball sampling.

Purposeful sampling is the 'easiest' method, because participants are selected based on willingness as well as availability.

In quota sampling, interviewers are given a quota of subjects of a specified type. These specified types are then recruited. Ideally, the quotas chosen should proportionally represent the characteristics of the population. There is, however, the challenge that the chosen sample may not be representative of other characteristics that were not considered.

Judgment sampling is also known as selective, or subjective, sampling. This technique relies on the judgment of the researcher when choosing whom to ask to participate.

“In snowball sampling, you begin by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in your study. You then ask them to recommend others who they may know who also meet the criteria. Snowball sampling is especially useful when you are trying to reach populations that are inaccessible or hard to find” (Trochim, 2020:6).

Whereas snowball sampling or ‘snowballing’ can be effective when a sampling frame is difficult to identify, judgment sampling has the advantage of being time- and cost-effective and it promises a range of responses. This is particularly useful in qualitative and mixed methods research which explains why it was adopted for this study. Only those who were available for interview or ready to participate were involved in the research. Furthermore, some of those involved recommended others, helping to connect the researcher with new participants who took part in interviews and discussions.

The drawbacks of the above approach reside in volunteer bias and the possibility that errors of judgment may be made by the researcher. Furthermore, while the findings could be broad, they may not necessarily be representative. Notwithstanding, it was still possible to generate some conclusions based on the outcome of the literature review and initial secondary research.

For this research, the Focus Group and semi-structured research participants were sampled through convenience technique while those for the in-depth interviews comprising 5 MFB directors and 6 LAPO Board members were recruited and interviewed through the snowballing and purposeful sampling techniques respectively.

4. CRITICAL INCIDENTS:

In addressing this research, Critical Incident framework was identified to be relevant to complement abduction and other tools. The literature on critical incidents in the lives of MFBs and their key promoters indicated that some of such incidents, how they were perceived and consequent reaction, contributed to the death of MFBs while some MFBs were strengthened by them. Critical incidents, as opined by McAteer et al (2010) challenge our assumptions or make us think differently about certain occurrences. They provide some helpful ideas that could be a guide for reflecting on important “incidents: What happened, where and when? Give a brief history of the incident. What is it that made the incident ‘critical’? ... How might your practice change and develop as a result of this analysis and learning.” (McAteer et al, 2010:107). “Critical incidents” are incidents that occur in organizations and in the lives of

individuals. They can alter the natural or intended course of the organization and individual. On reflection, the researcher reasoned that overcoming negative critical incidents and taking the opportunity to examine positive ones resonated with the idea of resilience. It immediately reminded him of one critical incident in the life of one MFB that changed the bank forever, and another incident that led to the death of another MFB.

Chapter 2 of the literature review on Critical Incidents (CI) by university of Pretoria (Undated) tried to clarify the difference between the term crisis and critical incident. This is because of the confusion in the literature that appears to suggest that they are synonyms. This may be because “a crisis is often the result of a critical incident”. A critical incident creates a crisis by overwhelming a person's usual coping strategies (Friedman, 2003:20 in University of Pretoria). Such crisis may be a consequence of stress or tension, which could have resulted from a critical incident (Greenstone & Leviton, 2002:1, in University of Pretoria). The Characteristics of the stress or tension and its contextual situation are key in the process of coping with the adversity and the anxiety associated with it. Of course, most critical incidents are unexpected; as they are most times always sudden. They are often unanticipated. Such experiences provide enormous challenge to individuals and organizations, and could be very devastating to them (Kleber & Brom, 1992:40). When a critical incident happens, the organization might feel helpless and vulnerable. This situation can put such organization or individual at the mercy of forces beyond their control, like the Novel Coronavirus (NC). ‘When a critical incident affects an organization, it could lead to several secondary stressful experiences’ (Wilson, 1989:53).

Critical incidents could contain an embedded structure, which could comprise one or more stressful factors. Some examples are the World wars, the Spanish influenza, the global financial crisis or the current NC responsible for the death of thousands of people in the world. “Most traumatic experiences, however, contain multiple stressors. For example, hijacking typically involves dimensions such as a threat to life, loss of property and personal injury. Critical incidents may be conceived as being relatively complex or simple. Complex traumatic events have many sub-components inherent in the trauma and require the victim to make a number of complex decisions, which may result in ambiguity due to possible alternative actions in the event. A simple critical incident is typically one-dimensional and clear with respect to the nature of the event and the possible behaviours one can enact” (University of Pretoria: Undated and accessed online on 4/4/20). Wilson (1989:54) is of the view that

‘complex or simple traumatic occurrences or shocks could largely be the result of the victim's reactions to, or perception of the critical incident; so also, is the severity of a critical incident’. However, effect of a critical incident is not usually linear. Rather, social support and financial standing could interact with adversity to determine the organizational response. Which means that path dependence (historical factors) and social factors matter in responding to critical incidents in an organization (Wilson, 1989).

Meichenbaum (1994) attempted making distinction between critical incidents, dividing them to critical type I and type II shocks. Type one shock would include rape, a car accident or an event like an earthquake. Such shocks could be single occurrence that is dangerous and overwhelming event. Type II shock could be an incident with multiple characteristics that are chronic and repeated, and usually due to intentional human design. They “More likely ... lead to long-term characteristic and interpersonal problems, for example detachment from others, and a restricted range of affect. Attempts to protect the self-dissociated responses, by using coping strategies such as denial, numbing, withdrawal...” (Meichenbaum, (1994:220) in University of Pretoria). The differentiation is not so much as man-made or not, but rather on the individual or organizations’ perception and consequent response to the incident. Friedman (2003:2) explains further by stating that ‘researchers originally believed that trauma (or shock) may be defined merely and exclusively as a catastrophic event which happened to an individual who was in the wrong place at the wrong time’. Thus, anyone who was exposed to such an incident would be traumatized. Friedman (2003:3) states that, ‘although exposure to a catastrophic stress event is a prerequisite for the developing of a disorder, it is insufficient in itself to traumatize the individual’. What really matters is how individuals and organizations perceive and respond to the incident. There could be certain situational and organizational predisposing factors (Lewis, 1996) that may affect the reaction to a critical incident.

According to Lewis (1996) each person, and by extension each organization, perceives a critical incident differently, in line with their unique historical, social and economic conditions. Consequently, what may be severe to one may not be to others; and so, Lewis (1996) holds the view that there are specific factors that lead to the development of resilience after a critical incident. That explains why a critical incident approach was implicated in this research methodology. And assisted in arriving at the outcomes in the in-depth interviews of some CEOs of MFBs that survived adversity like Asset Matrix, Emerald and LAPO MFBs.

5. SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH APPROACH:

Overall, the mixed methods approach was very helpful in addressing the research problem, coupled with the researcher's personal experience in the field of researching in the MFI space where official data was difficult to come by since many participants were reluctant to provide, particularly, numerical information. Furthermore, they were frequently not in possession of the data which affected their ability to answer questions on the financial and operational performance of individual MFBs in the industry with numbers. Consequently, the mixed methods approach was instrumental in capturing the outcomes that a qualitative or quantitative approach alone could not produce. The mixed methods approach provided the flexibility to apply what worked in scrutinizing symptoms and identifying both philosophical and practical challenges. Most importantly, it was effective in terms of investigating how some MFBs overcame challenges, embedding resilience in their organizations while others succumbed to organizational and environmental challenges and failed.

In line with the adopted methodological approach, the reports of the Strategic Planning Department of Havilah Open Door (HOD), was examined, as well as the outcomes of the initially conducted focus groups on general and unique practices in the MFB industry, at the inception of the study. Data from the finance department of LAPO were also considered. Focus group discussions were carried out with a semi-structured guide specifically aimed at identifying the key issues, challenges and opportunities confronting MFBs in Nigeria and to supply or validate ideas from the literature review. The exercise specifically focused on the following topics: business model and organizational management, funding, leadership, savings mobilization, credit management, fraudulent practices, debt recovery, internal processes, governance, and regulatory issues as earlier identified in the literature review. Furthermore, awareness of MFBs, patronage, market segmentation, customer perceptions and loyalty drivers were also considered in the research process; as they related to the objectives of the research. The systematic research approach started with research plan and development of interview guides, recruitment of participants, focus group discussion, semi-structured interview and in-depth interview. Secondary data sourcing was done at every stage of the study. At the end of the process, 54 participants/ interviewees were involved in the research.

5.1. Data Collection Process:

The participants in the focus groups were managers and customers of MFBs aged between 25 and 50 years. Sixteen (16) groups were conducted in Lagos, the biggest MFB market in the country, with the following compositions:

Table 5.1: Focus group participants’ breakdown

<u>Respondent category</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Tota</u> <u>l</u>
• Managers, staff and regulators of MFBs	4	4	8
• Customers and community leaders	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>16</u>

The participants in the FGD were mainly existing customers or community leaders in places where AB, FBN, LAPO, Pearls, Gold and Grooming operated. Also included in the FGD were managers and senior staff of AB, LAPO, Allover, BOI, Mic Trust, Estate, Cash Flow, Susu, Providence, Support and Grooming. Some junior staff in regulatory roles also took part. The guide used for the focus group discussion is in Appendix 1. Audio tape was used to record the discussion which was transcribed thereafter.

The examination of the transcribed data helped to identify some of the key issues confronting the MFB industry in Nigeria. It also assisted in clarifying themes that could be explored relating to resilience in the industry and in fine-tuning the discussion guide for the participants in the next stage of the research. Suggestions from the focus groups necessitated the decision to proceed to collate and analyze MIX market data and other secondary data. These were primarily elicited from Augusto & Co. (a rating agency) and BA Adedipe Associates (a leading MFB consultant). The data were used to confirm, challenge or complement the data from Havilah Open Door (HOD) /LAPO. The secondary data shed light on issues relating to risk management, capital and insider trading as a consequence of fraudulence or system gaming that violates prudential guidelines. A number of other practical issues confronting the MFI were considered including governance and stakeholder ship as an intertwined concept. Directors and very senior managers were involved in governance practices that hindered rather than helped many MFBs to be sustainable, let alone to prosper.

To fill the gaps in data, a qualitative approach was employed, namely semi-structured interviews using an interview guide with the intention of eliciting in more depth and details,

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respondents’ understandings and perceptions of how some MFBs survived adversity whilst others did not. As suggested earlier, Martinez (2013: unpublished) argued that “...qualitative Research Design has been shown to be particularly suited to analyzing dynamic, interactive processes within different operations and management control systems”. The semi-structured research, with 27 respondents, was aimed at finding the underlying causes of MFB failure. The 27 adult participants were interviewed in Lagos in February 2016 and were divided into the following categories:

Table 5.2: Semi-structured interviews sample breakdown

	Participants	Male	Female	Total
1.	Active micro-finance bank officers	3	2	5
2.	Failed micro-finance bank officers	2	3	5
3.	Active micro-finance bank customers	3	2	5
4.	Failed micro-finance bank customers	2	3	5
5.	Community leaders in active MFBs locations	5	-	5
6.	Regulatory authority and rating officers (primary)	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>
	Total	17	10	27

The interviewees consisted of 17 males and 10 females – representing some 54% of the 50 interviewees invited – and their age quota specifications were as shown in Table 5.3 below:

Table: 5.3: Semi-structured interviews age quota specifications

	Age group	% of the National population	Quota		Total
			Male	Female	
1.	25 – 34 yrs.	15.4	8	5	13
2.	35 – 44 yrs.	9.8	5	4	9
3.	45 – 50 yrs.	<u>5.3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
	Total	30.5	17	10	27

Interviews were conducted at two locations: firstly, in the researcher’s office; and secondly at the Federal Palace Hotel in Victoria Island where two regulatory officers were interviewed. Each interview lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour. Audio tape recorder was used to record each interview. And the researcher had to transcribe the audio recordings of the completed twenty seven interviewees.

After transcribing, it was identified that some of the failed Nigerian MFBs in the narratives of the participants were: Combined Benefits, Andro, Citadel, Crystal, Daily Capital, Integrated, Ipaja, Mosandic, Oreta and Providence.

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After collecting data from secondary industry sources and primary sources through the semi-structured interviews, there were still certain gaps regarding the underlying causes of failure that had to be explored. For instance, it was found that Non-Performing Loans (NPL) often preceded MFB failure. Portfolio At Risk (PAR) was high amongst delinquent MFBs. He (the researcher) then needed to explore those areas in greater detail, to identify links, relationships and tendencies.

Consequently, two more, complementary qualitative methods were adopted. First, in-depth interviews of the five top expert practitioners in the MFB industry were conducted to identify their values, belief systems and critical incidents. These were based on their life experiences that may have filtered into their business practices and applied business model. 'Critical incidents' are not 'things' which exist independently of an observer, awaiting discovery (Tripp, 1993); they are created. Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation and interpret the significance of an event. To take something as a critical incident is a value judgment we make, and the basis of that judgment is the significance we attach to the meaning of the incident (Tripp, 1993:8).

The in-depth interviews were conducted to investigate and possibly validate the findings of the semi-structured interviews and key themes from the literature review. These featured two chairmen, two chief executive officers and one chief operating officer from five MFBs as indicated in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: **First in-depth interviews sample breakdown**

	Participants	Male	Female	Total
1.	MFB Board members	2	-	2
2.	MFB CEOs	2	-	2
3.	MFB COO	-	1	1
	Total	4	1	5

Two of them were from large national MFBs, one represented a state MFB and two worked within small unit MFBs. The chairman of one of the large national MFBs is the researcher himself and he was interviewed by a colleague. Although contact was made with 9 directors as prospective interviewees, only 5 were available and two requested anonymity. They were allowed to start by discussing their values and their perceptions of their role at work. They were then invited to identify critical incidents in their life experiences, and ultimately what they did or did not do to acquire the status of the MFBs they ran and/or had oversight of. Each

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interview lasted for between 90 and 120 minutes. The in-depth interview guide is in Appendix 2. Audio recording was used for the interviews. The researcher transcribed them on arrival home after the interviews.

The second, complementary method was based on discussions, focusing on resilience according to board members of LAPO MFB, the largest and arguably the most resilient MFB in Nigeria. Consequently, the researcher asked 6 members of the board of LAPO MFB that he chaired the following six questions to triangulate data sources on MFB survival / failure. This interview was intended to complement earlier interviews and discussions to narrow down the critical issues on MFB resilience narrative from the perspective of the directors of the largest MFB in West Africa. This MFB was responsible for about 30% of credit in the Nigerian MFB market. The questions comprised:

- Name and rank order of the five most important personal characteristics which you believe are likely to lead to success in the management of an MFB.
- Why do you think so?
- Name and rank the five most important personal characteristics which you believe are likely to lead to failure in the management of an MFB.
- Why do you think so?
- How can an MFB that is failing return to success?
- Give some examples of those that you know that became viable again.

This interview gave the researcher access to what ordinarily would most likely be unavailable to other researchers as practitioners in the industry.

Table 5.5: LAPO MFB Board in-depth interviews composition

	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	Male	3
2.	Female	3
	Total	6

This complementary method produced results that seemed to corroborate some earlier findings. Some fresh findings also emerged, particularly in relation to the role of “forced” savings among borrowers, foreign loan hedging, micro insurance, and Staff At Risk (SAR). Other salient themes were Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and values and business practices that emerged when all directors and shareholders belonged to one parish of a church

and met regularly after church services. Additional data had to be collected from credible newspapers such as Guardian, Punch, Telegraph and Vanguard to supplement information from the interviewees.

5.2. Coding, analysis and discussion of the data

Firstly, the qualitative data were coded. Saldana (2013) argues that a code in qualitative research often refers to phrases or words that capture the essence of data from a research story or texts. Five types of coding are commonly used: Descriptive, Process, In vivo, Pattern and Simultaneous (Saldana, 2013). Descriptive coding which summarized the primary topic of / in the texts was adopted for the purpose of “putting the data back together in a more meaningful way” (Creswell, 2015:156).

So, applying the descriptive coding, 33 variables were identified and indicated below. They are: system gaming, refusal to repay loans, manipulation of due process, falsification of financial figures, unethical practices, absconding with bank loans, creation of ghost loans, financial mismanagement, bad loans, lending models, savings models, interest rates, liquidity ratio, harvesting, human resource management, insurance, governance, loan hedging, risk management, reputational management, communal culture, mercenary culture, business goals and objectives, socialization, life experiences, luck/chance happening, stealing, Portfolio At Risk (PAR), operational sufficiency, financial sufficiency, profitability, loss, and Staff At Risk (SAR). Those were brought together to arrive at 15 codes in the findings. These were further aggregated to arrive at combined/primary coding that defined the main themes of this research namely, Business model, Behaviour of Human Elements, Organizational Culture, Critical Incidents and Resilience Capabilities.

In analyzing the secondary quantitative data listed, Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient (SCC) was used to show relationships and tendencies. The weakness of SCC is that it does not show any cause and effect or explain the reason why observations are the way they are. That notwithstanding, it is a useful statistical tool of analysis, showing tendencies and bringing deeper insight into earlier findings whilst allowing sense to be made of some of the findings. Correlation analysis was complemented by other analytic tools like commitment and the motives of stakeholders. Since this is an exploratory study, the aim was to gain some understanding of how and why MFBs cope with adversity. SCC helps draw attention to areas that further research can provide relevant insights into.

For instance, three of the computations, Portfolio at Risk (PAR), Operational Self-Sufficiency (OSS) and unpaid loans were taken as dependent variables while the interest rate was assumed as an independent variable. Those variables were outcomes of the secondary data whose report is stated in Chapter 4. The intention of the correlation calculation is to identify whether there was a relationship between the price and interest rate of credit, and the ability/willingness to pay back loans. The reason for this is that, in the terminal stages of the failed MFBs, two things happened. They are a preponderance of unpaid loans, and the banks inability to repay depositors and creditors. In the literature review, both were linked to NPLs that resulted from either the fraudulent acts of principal actors or non-observance of regulatory prudential guidelines. In some cases, a combination of both was evident amongst most of the stakeholders in the MFBs.

5.3: Coding Result Summary

The number of people involved in all the primary studies and initial focus groups referred to earlier, totaled 54. The primary data were the outcome of the entire structured, semi-structured and in- depth interviews, inclusive of discussions with some of the directors of LAPO MFB. The key themes that emerged from the primary studies and the initial focus groups are grouped into 15 sub heads (second column) with a number assigned to each in the first column of the table. The frequency of people who mentioned issues related to each theme and the percentage of total respondents / participants were indicated. Seven of the fifteen codes (Capital, NPL, Governance, Information / due diligence, managerial inexperience, financial management and business environment) were identified as a consequence of underlying themes of Stakeholder Behaviour, Organizational Culture, Regulatory Factors/Business Models and Critical Incidents. Business models were in turn made up of interest rates, group/individual lending and loan hedging/insurance. The same 7 (mentioned earlier) were also identified as immediate precipitants of MFBs' organizational resilience or failure. The 4 identified underlying factors (key stakeholders' behaviour/fraudulence, culture, business model and regulatory factors) that predicate either organizational resilience or failure could also be linked to the life story/experiences of key promoters and directors of MFBs and critical incidents. This suggests that multiple variables are involved in organizational resilience or failure. What is not in doubt is that all the above variables are involved in organizational resilience narrative, whether at primary or secondary level.

6: ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure that the study conforms fully to the ethical standard of the university, two ethics approvals were sought and gotten. The first, directed at focus group discussion and semi-structured interview was gotten in 2015 with ethics Protocol number: BUS/PGR/UH/02251. When that research approach did not generate enough data, the second ethics application was made and approval gotten in 2017, with ethics Protocol number: BUS/PGR/UH/02251(1).

The second ethics approval provided the cover to conduct in-depth interview to get expert information on critical incidents, and discussion with six participants from LAPO board to confirm or challenge earlier findings.

In executing those methods directly with interviewees/participants, the following ethics protocol had to be observed:

- Firstly, the aim of the research was stated to the interviewees and those willing to participate in the research were asked to sign the consent form
- Secondly, interviewees and participants were assured of confidentiality and that they could opt out of the research at any stage.
- Thirdly, the participants and interviewees who were willing to participate signed the forms.

It is interesting to observe that none of the interviewees/participants opted out of the study, once they consented to participate in the study. Furthermore, whereas most of the banking staff and community leaders interviewed requested anonymity, the Managing Directors, Chairmen, and Regulatory officials interviewed actually desired to be quoted in the research.

- Finally, a password-protected computer was used to analyze and store the data from the research to ensure confidentiality.

In line with the specifications of the Ethics Approval Notification form:

- i. Data collection was completed within the approved period of 07/06/2018 to 30/03/2019
- ii. The research did not involve any invasive procedure that called for the completion of an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form;
- iii. An official written permission was obtained for the in-depth interview of the 2 regulatory officers at the Federal Palace Hotel, Lagos;
- iv. No aspect of the research was amended or extended; so, there was no need for the completion of another EC2 form;

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- v. There was no adverse circumstance such as physical harm, intrusion of privacy or breach of confidentiality during the entire study period;
- vi. The UH protocol number and the name of the approving committee was quoted in the research participants' recruitment form;
- vii. The research findings was made strictly confidential and utilized for the UH degree of Doctor of Business Administration (Organisational Resilience) only.

7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper summarizes the research approach undertaken during my six-year doctoral research in University of Herfordshire to investigate organisational Resilience in Microfinance Banks in Lagos Nigeria. It articulates the systematic manner, from the underlying philosophy of integrating pragmatic realism with social constructivism and the outcome of using a mixed methods approach and abduction.

The specific techniques applied; non-probability purposeful sampling based on snowballing was indicated. A (descriptive) coding approach that brought together phrases or words that captured the essence of data from research stories or texts was adopted as the mixed methods applied were based more on qualitative than quantitative materials. The number of people involved in the primary research (interviews and focus group) was a total of 54.

In summary, the following Research Approach was adopted:

- i. Focus group study to identify key issues in the MFB industry in Nigeria, and in particular Lagos state of Nigeria, in an inductive manner; and gathering of quantitative secondary data within our company, MIX Market, CBN and Nigeria main rating agency on micro finance practices that could be helpful to the study, in a deductive manner. 16 participants were involved in the focus group.
- ii. Decision on the research approach of the study starting from the literature review, deciding on the epistemological commitment to pragmatic realism (implicating social constructivism) and consequent mixed methods approach and purposeful sampling.
- iii. Conduct of systematic literature review in areas of Stakeholder and Institutional theories, Organizational Culture, Organizational Resilience, Micro Finance development in Nigeria within the local and international contexts, Mission Drift, MFB promoters/senior management and critical incidents in their lives, Ambidexterity and Dynamic capabilities. They were done as they were identified as relevant to the topic of exploring organisational resilience of Micro

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Finance Banks in Nigeria. So also was the literature on WEF five components of organizational resilience which were found appropriate as a template to discuss the findings. WEF also captured most of the key themes from the literature review

- iv. Decision on the boundaries of the research by committing to study MFBs organizational resilience in Lagos state of Nigeria, between 2010 and 2018. This meant the researcher was going to do a case study of MFBs' resilience in Lagos within the time frame identified above. The choice being primarily because of security concerns in other parts of the country and having a manageable research scope. This was complemented by a case study of LAPO MFB, the single largest and probably most resilient MFB in Lagos Nigeria, to derive learning and insights that other MFBs could learn from. Additional reason for its choice was because of data availability.
- v. Development of the research guide for semi-structured interview of all the segments of key stakeholders of MFBs including regulators, managers, customers, community leaders and investors of MFBs and implementation of same, with mostly qualitative data gotten from all the interviewees except those from the regulators and rating agencies that supplied numeric data. Twenty seven people were interviewed. Audio tape recorder was used to record the interview responses which were transcribed after the interview. The interview per respondent lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.
- vi. Analysis and Evaluation of the data to identify how and why MFBs are organizationally resilient and why some fail.
- vii. Embarking on in-depth interview of founders and leaders of MFBs to identify critical incidents in their lives that may have impacted their MFBs. Five respondents participated in this interview. Such in-depth interviews lasted for between 90 and 120 minutes per interviewee; and were transcribed after the interview, in my home.
- viii. Interview of board members of the largest MFB which had over 20% of the market out of over 900 MFBs operating in Nigeria to identify reasons for the overwhelming success and resilience of their MFB compared with others, and how and why the organization has been the dominant leader, overcoming all manners of challenges to remain organizational resilient and strong. Six respondents were available for this segment of the research, bringing the total persons available for the primary research to 54. This interview lasted for an average of 15

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minutes per respondent. The responses were taken by long hand which spared the researcher the time for transcribing.

- ix. Collate and analyze all the data in a way to capture useful data that may have been missed at earlier stages of the study.
- x. Discussion of the findings using WEF (Riskviews, 2013). This helped to evaluate MFBs' organizational resilience and to analyze the relationship of resilience theories and the data collected. To complement WEF, Stakeholder and Institutional theories, MFB practices, regulatory interventions and critical incidents as they occurred in the lives of key players/decision-makers in MFBs were brought into the discussion, in interrogating the data from the research, despite WEF having implicated most of them.
- xi. Write-up the findings, derive insights from the data to arrive at relevant conclusions.

Overall, abduction provided guidance in the research approach. As this study was more practice oriented, it identified and summarized the limitations of the study. The apparent limitations notwithstanding, the study produced a foundation for future researchers to build upon. It also produced an outcome that could certainly assist future researchers in the particular area of organizational resilience in the finance sector, of which MFBs are a part. More importantly, the research produced an outcome that could help practitioners to make informed managerial and operational decisions. It could also help investors to appreciate what to look out for when they choose to enter MFB business. This study was expected to assist regulatory authorities as well, particularly NDIC and EFCC, to appreciate the gravity and nature of the challenge of fraudulence, and the need to enforce stricter regulatory standards and financial surveillance starting with a healthy capital base. There must be scrutiny of who money is being lent to, and by what method. Strict monitoring and prudential guidelines must be enforced in managerial and operational practices as well as in financial transactions, while preventing small unit MFBs from taking deposits.

Furthermore, practitioners should be encouraged to embrace the culture of hedging foreign loans, domiciling the foreign exchange at the time of taking such loans in a resilient commercial bank. This was believed could protect them from the volatility of the foreign exchange market which is endemic in developing economies particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. So also, is the need for delayed harvesting in the MFB industry to develop robust capital, a defence in adversity.

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Finally, it can be argued that this research approach did justice to the study area which, though exploratory, set out to gain an understanding of how and why some MFBs overcame adversity in Lagos Nigeria, particularly between 2010 – 2018, and why others could not, and thereby, bridging the literature deficit in that area. The findings of this study as well as the emergent themes from the research were identified as largely implicated in the five dimensions of WEF (Riskviews, 2013) in the literature review, which were also rendered explicit earlier in this article. The implication is that WEF presented a strategic tool to analyze and discuss the findings in Micro Finance Banking in Nigeria. It is hoped that the inadequacy of this methodological approach notwithstanding, it provides a frame work worthy of consideration for future researches in the field.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

My name is

I am from... I am undertaking a study on MFB Resilience. Please, feel free to discontinue participation at any time. The main objective of this discussion is to ascertain how and why some Nigerian Micro-finance Banks are doing well while others are not, to the extent that many of them closed down in 2010. Please feel free to tell me your honest opinion on the issue, one after another. There are no wrong or right answers and you can agree or disagree with what another person has said. All your responses will be strictly confidential and will be utilised for academic purposes only.

- Are you aware of any micro-finance banks?
- Which of them are you aware of?
- Which of these MFBs have you ever patronised / worked for?
- Which of them do you currently patronise / work for?
- What are your likes about these MFBs? Any other likes? What else?
- What are your dislikes about these MFBs? Any other dislikes? What else?
- Which MFBs would you not patronise / work for?
- Why would you not patronise / work for the MFBs?
- Are you aware that some MFBs have closed down?
- Are you aware of any such MFBs?
- Which of them are you aware of?
- Do you know why they closed down?
- Let's discuss the reasons why each of the MFBs closed down.
- To what extent do you think the following factors contributed to the failure of each of the MFBs: management, funding, leadership, savings mobilisation lapses, fraudulent practices, inefficient debt recovery, internal processes, governance, regulatory issues

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- In which order would you categorise Nigerian MFBs? I mean, which ones would you classify as group one, group two, group three, etc.?
- What are the similarities of each group?
- What suggestions would you offer for the improvement of Nigerian MFBs?

A classification of the various existing MFBs into groups based on their perceived performance resulted in four categories:

- Those with a strong capital base and many branches;
- Those that are not very strong financially and have a small workforce and few branches;
- Upcoming MFBs in terms of capital base and positioning;
- MFBs no longer in existence;

Appendix 2: **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Introduction: Good morning Sir / Madam,

My name is

We are conducting a research on micro-finance banking challenges in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of a DBA from the University of Hertfordshire. We thought it necessary to have a conversation with you because you have been a very important player in the industry. You can opt out of this interview at any time.

Questions

1. What is your impression about the Nigerian micro-finance bank industry?
2. What are your likes about the industry?
3. What are your dislikes about it?
4. Anything else?
5. What else?
6. What has been your experience in the industry?
7. What was very striking in your experience? I mean, something that you remember every time?
8. Have you ever had any bad experience in the industry? If so, could you share the experience with us?
9. In your opinion how is the industry faring today?
10. In your opinion, why is it that many MFBs do well despite the Nigerian economic challenges?
11. Is there any other reason?
12. Why do you say so?
13. Any other reason?
14. Why do you think some MFBs find it difficult to survive the Nigerian economic challenges?
15. Is there any other reason?

16. What else?
17. In your opinion why did some MFBs die? I mean why did they stop doing business?
18. How did that happen?
19. Any other reason?
20. But that also happens in the surviving MFBs, why in this case did it lead to its death?
21. Why did what led to its death happen?
22. Why did what you just said now happen?
23. Is there any other reason why it happened?
24. I am a bit confused, can you please elaborate.
25. You as a very notable practitioner – how did your bank go out of existence?
26. Please explain more, what happened.
27. Why did that happen?
28. Why did what you just said happen?
29. In your perception, is there one thing in particular over and above others that made the bank go out of operations?
30. What particular thing is that?
31. Why do you think that is the major reason?
32. What you said may also happen in some of the surviving banks; why was your own situation different?
33. You have opened my eyes to some of those very interesting issues in the industry.
34. Are you aware that some MFBs bounce back after very difficult moments?
35. How do they do it?
36. What do they do?
37. Why do they do that?
38. Why did you not do those things in your own MFBs?

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39. Any other reason?

40. If you were to run another MFB, what will you do to make it resilient; that is to be able to adapt to difficult circumstances and be able to overcome them?

41. Any other thing?

42. What else?

43. Are there other comments you wish to make concerning the topic we are exploring?

44. What else?

45. When did you enter into the Nigerian micro-finance bank industry?

46. How did you enter?

47. Has micro-finance banking always been your dream career?

48. What was your main reason for going into the industry?

49. Any other reason?

50. What else?

Thank you.

Appendix 7: UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned [please give your name here, in BLOCK CAPITALS]

.....
of.....

... hereby freely agree to take part in the study entitled: EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HOW AND WHY SOME MICROFINANCE BANKS OVERCOME ADBVERSITY AND WHY OTHERS DO NOT

.....

1. I confirm that I have been given a Participant Information Sheet (a copy of which is attached to this form) giving particulars of the study, including its aim(s), methods and design, the names and contact details of key people and, as appropriate, the risks and potential benefits, and any plans for follow-up studies that might involve further approaches to participants. I have been given details of my involvement in the study. I have been told that in the event of any significant change to the aim(s) or design of the study I will be informed, and asked to renew my consent to participate in it.
2. I have been assured that I may withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage or having to give a reason.
3. In giving my consent to participate in this study, I understand that voice, video or photo-recording may take place.
4. I have been told how information relating to me (data obtained in the course of the study, and data provided by me about myself) will be handled: how it will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how it will or may be used.
5. I have been told that I may at some time in the future be contacted again in connection with this or another study.

Signature of participant.....Date.....

Signature of
investigator.....Date.....

Name of investigator (IN BLOCK
CAPITALS).....Date.....