



Micro-Financing and Performance of Women-Led Shea Butter Businesses in Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Women in shea-butter business in Niger state, Nigeria, have over the years faced with several challenges that hampered their performance despite the abundance of shea trees. Micro-financing remains one of the key factors driving performance but it under-examined within the context of this study. This study therefore examined the effect of micro-financing (Interest rate, loan duration and loan recovery strategies) on the performance (output/sales) of women in shea butter business in Niger state, Nigeria. The study utilizes cross sectional survey research design and data for the study were collected through primary sources from 278 sampled women in shea butter business in Niger state. Data for the study were analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The study found that interest rate has a significant negative effect on the performance of women in shea butter business in Niger state with a coefficient of -0.170 and p-value of 0.020 while, loan duration has significant positive effect on performance ($\beta = 1.568$; $P < 0.001$). Also, loan recovery strategies have significant positive effect on the performance of women-led shea-butter businesses in Niger state ($\beta = 0.370$; $P < 0.001$). Consequently, the study recommends that microfinance banks should lower their interest rates, extend the loan duration and sustain their loan recovery strategies to encourage women in shea butter business to patronize the banks, conveniently pay back the loan with minimum default rate and fast-track loan recovery process to achieve improved performance among the women in shea-butter businesses in Niger state.

Keywords: Microfinancing, interest rates, loan duration, loan recovery strategies, performance and shea butter.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The essence of establishing a business is primarily to achieve the objectives of providing goods and services thereby enabling the business to make profit and continue to survive. In order to achieve the set business objective, organizations continue to strive and develop various strategies. The effective and efficient attainment of the set goal by an organization via a well-designed approach is termed performance. In furtherance to this assertion, Moussa (2020) posited that organizational performance encompasses all aspects of tangible output or outcome of an entity as measured against its set plan either in form of goals or objectives.

Organizational performance is measured along financial and non-financial dimensions, both of which provide a holistic understanding of an organization's success. The financial performance measures are crucial matrix for evaluating a company's financial health and profitability, reflecting its ability to generate returns for investors and manage costs efficiently (Dahmen & Rodríguez, 2022). This according to Laitinen (2019), includes traditional indicators such as revenue growth, net profit, return on equity (ROE), and earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT). On the other hand, non-financial dimensions of business performance provide important metrics for ascertaining the long-term sustainability and competitive advantage of the business as they directly affect customer loyalty, operational efficiency, and brand reputation (Neely, 2021). The non-financial indicators cover customer satisfaction, innovation

capability, employee engagement, and environmental impact (Huang & Watson, 2022). Customer satisfaction, for example, is a predictor of future revenue, while high levels of employee engagement correlate with enhanced productivity and innovation (Olufemi, 2019).

All over the world, there are well documented evidences of improved performance in institutions and organizations. For instance, Okafor (2020) argued that the competitive nature of firms in European and Asian countries is on the increase due to the well-regulated, coordinated and competitive business environment as well as access to information. However, in Africa particularly Nigeria, the level of business performance is highly unstable and the key bane of performance fluctuation is information asymmetry and lack of clear and well-coordinated institutional framework to drive holistic organizational performance (Okafor, 2020; Zhiri, 2017). While the entire business ecosystem in Nigeria grapples with the challenges of poor performance, small businesses are the worst hit by the uncoordinated policies and programmes of government and even though, small businesses are the drivers of the nation's economy (Yusufu et al., 2020).

Beck et al. (2023), confirmed that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are crucial for the economic development because they play a key role in promoting inclusive economic growth by generating employment opportunities and supporting poverty alleviation efforts, especially in rural and underserved regions. Despite the numerous advantageous roles played by small businesses in Nigeria, they still encounter significant obstacles such as limited access to finance, regulatory complexities, and inadequate infrastructure (World Bank, 2023). Sanni et al. (2020) confirmed that despite government efforts aimed to improve the performance of small businesses through the intervention of Bank of Industry, Central bank of Nigeria, conventional banks, there still leave a huge gap in small businesses financing in the rural communities which is partly due to their inability to provide the much-needed collateral, high interest rates, short repayment period, and inability to access government intervention for small businesses. This development hampered the performance small businesses thereby making them to contribute insignificantly to the local economy

Microfinance banks across the country are charged with responsibility of providing financial services to meet the financing needs of small and medium scale entrepreneurs (Mohammed et al., 2023). The micro-credit functions of the micro-finance banks which are of particular interest to the performance of small businesses include, interest rate, loan duration and loan recovery strategy. Microfinance interest rates is the cost of capital, where lower and more favorable rates tend to enhance profitability and growth, while high rates erode margins and constrain reinvestment (Ashta & Hudon, 2019). Loan duration shapes SME is the length of time it takes the borrower (SMEs) to repay the loan with the interest (Onyeiwu et al., 2021). Repayment flexibility, as adequately longer tenures ease cash flow pressure and support expansion, whereas very short durations can limit scaling and meaningful growth. Loan recovery strategies covers the extent of encouragement and sometimes the use of legal process to recover loans from the borrowers and this strategy whichever way it is applied affect the performance of SMEs.

The above explanation clearly show that a relationship exists between the activities of the microfinance banks and the performance of small businesses. While the effect is pervasive among small businesses, it is felt more by women-dominated businesses (Amran & Mwasiaji, 2019). For instance, in Niger state, Shea butter represents one of the women-dominated businesses but, their performance in shea butter production is generally among other factors, affected by the credit facilities available to them from the microfinance banks. While the effect of microfinance credit has been evaluated in relation to the various performance indicators and sustainability of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) both within and outside Nigeria,

Ibrahim (2018), Mnunka & Oyagi (2020), Dhungana et al. (2022) and Herlinawati et al. (2023), specific effort aimed to examine the effect of microfinancing on the women dominated businesses especially, women-led shea butter business in Niger state, is almost next to non-existence, to the best of knowledge of this study. This study therefore deemed it necessary to consider the effect of microfinancing (interest rates, loan duration and loan recovery strategies on the performance (output and sales) of women-led shea butter businesses in Niger state (Bosso, Edati, and Mariga), Nigeria. The local governments were chosen due to their dominance in shea butter production in Niger state.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the study reviewed relevant literature within subject matter of the study, conceptually, theoretically and empirically.

2.1 Microfinancing

Microfinancing constitutes the allocation of financial resources by micro-finance institutions to small-scale business operators to facilitate their ability to fulfill financial commitments (Amran and Mwasiagi, 2019). Microfinancing especially in Nigeria refers to the provision of financial services, primarily credit, savings, and insurance, to low-income individuals or small enterprises who traditionally lack access to formal banking institutions. The aim of microfinance is to promote financial inclusion by providing the underserved population with the tools to engage in productive activities, manage risks, and improve their economic status. One of the central features of microfinance in Nigeria is its focus on small-scale entrepreneurs, especially women, who represent a significant portion of the informal sector (Agboola, 2015). This enables women in the rural communities to access capital to start and expand their businesses, thereby contributing to household income and reducing poverty levels. The conditions, programmes and schemes under which microfinance banks operate which are of interest especially to the women entrepreneurs are reviewed in detail as follows.

2.1.1 Interest Rate

Loan interest rate is a major consideration and concern in microfinancing as it affects the performance small businesses. Generally, Moussa (2020) defines interest rate as the cost of borrowing or the amount which borrowers must pay in addition to the principal loan amount for accessing credit services from microfinance institutions (MFIs). The interest rate in microfinancing is designed to cover not only the cost of funds but also the operational expenses incurred by MFIs, which tend to be higher compared to conventional banks due to smaller loan sizes and the labor-intensive nature of dealing with numerous small-scale borrowers (Amran and Mwasiagi, 2019; Anyanwu, 2022). Microfinance interest rates in Nigeria are also influenced by several factors, including inflation, the cost of funds, the risk of default, and the regulatory framework established by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The interest rates often range from 20% to 50% annually depending on the risk factors, operational cost (Maitrot & Hulme, 2021). Generally, the rate of interest charged by microfinance banks specifically in Nigeria plays a great role in determining the credit accessibility of small businesses.

2.1.2 Loan Duration

Another microfinancing dimension used in this study is loan duration. Loan duration also have considerable implications on the performance businesses. Loan duration in microfinancing refers to the length of time granted to the borrowers, typically small businesses, to repay the loans by the micro-finance institutions (Apat & Bawica, 2022). This duration is a strong determinant of loan affordability, repayment success, and the overall impact of the loan on business sustainability and performance. All over the globe, microfinance loans are structured to provide flexible terms and conditions that accommodate the needs of small enterprises, but the loan duration varies depending on the institution, the region, and the economic environment

(Ibrahim, 2018). In most cases, shorter loan durations often place small businesses and individual lenders under significant pressure, while longer durations offer them a manageable repayment terms which often come with higher interest rate (Apat & Bawica, 2022). Also, Ibrahim (2018) confirmed that shorter loan terms help to reduce debt burdens, but limit the ability of small businesses to invest in long-term projects. On the other hand, longer loan duration can provide more flexibility but escalates the risk of default and reduce the bank's ability to turnover its loan and satisfy the financial needs of other categories of prospective borrowers (Olowe, 2015). In order to overcome the challenges posed by the loan repayment pattern in Nigeria, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has introduced a number of reforms to encourage flexible loan terms, including extended repayment periods, to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Olowe, 2015).

2.1.3 Loan Recovery Strategies

Microfinance loan recovery strategies in Nigeria are the structured measures microfinance banks employ to safeguard portfolio quality by combining robust pre-disbursement screening, such as stringent client appraisal, character assessment, and careful setting of collateral and credit terms, to reduce the likelihood of default from the outset (Anyanwu, 2022). Mudakkar and Uppal (2023) opined that during the life of the loan, institutions rely on ongoing techniques including close monitoring of clients' businesses, regular repayment reminders, use of group or joint-liability schemes that harness peer monitoring and peer pressure and continuous borrower engagement to sustain repayment discipline and early detection of distress. When repayment problems arise, banks deploy corrective tools such as loan restructuring, renegotiated repayment schedules, temporary principal forbearance, interest rate adjustments and where feasible, consolidation of multiple obligations, with improved recovery and lower non-performing loans (Nwosu & Akpors, 2020). In more severe or persistent default cases, lenders may escalate to legal remedies and regulatory instruments ranging from formal demand letters and court actions to enforcement of collateral and the Central Bank's Global Standing Instruction (GSI) that allows recovery from accounts in other banks while also suspending defaulters from further credit, all aimed at improving repayment performance without undermining long-term customer relationships or institutional sustainability (Okafor, 2018)

2.1.4 Concept of Performance

The concept of business performance encompasses various facets of company operations such as financial results, market position, and overall organizational efficiency. It acts as a crucial gauge of a business's success in achieving its objectives, reflecting its capacity to generate profits, maintain growth, and compete effectively. According to Olubiyi (2024), organizational performance refers to the degree to which an organization achieves its established goals and creates value through the effective distribution of resources. Performance is frequently evaluated through metrics such as profitability, market share, customer satisfaction, innovation, and operational effectiveness (Gyan, 2024). Measuring organizational performance according to Ahmad et al. (2024), is essential for both public and private sector entities to establish disparity in goal-activity relationship. Organizational performance can be measured through both economic and non-economic otherwise known as financial and non-financial dimensions.

Financial performance encapsulates quantitative outcomes that concentrate on monetary indicators such as profitability, liquidity, return on investment (ROI), sales and output volume, revenue, and market share (Rai, 2024). These metrics are intrinsically linked to the economic prosperity of the firm and are frequently utilized by investors, creditors, and regulatory bodies to assess a firm's overall health and sustainability. Non-financial performance on the other hand, encompasses qualitative indicators such as customer satisfaction, innovation, employee engagement, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmental sustainability (Hafis et al., 2024). These elements are increasingly acknowledged as vital contributors to enduring

competitiveness and growth. From the foregoing explanations on both dimensions of performance, it can be inferred that duo are complementary aspects of firm success. While, financial metrics provide critical insights into a firm's short-term profitability and stability, the non-financial indicators offer a deeper understanding of long-term capabilities competitiveness and sustainability of the firms. Considering the domain of the study as well as the nature of their business (shea butter production) this study considers the volume of output of shea butter produced/sold which fall under the financial dimension as the appropriate measure of performance in this instance since most of the women do not keep proper record of accounting that could lead to the determination of profit.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored by Micro-finance credit theory which was postulated by Muhammed Yunus in 1976, in response to the financial exclusion of low-income individuals, particularly in developing countries (Kabeer, 2019). The theory postulates that the provision of credit by micro-finance institutions can act as a catalyst for financial independence, thereby contributing to both economic and social development (Ahmad and Mahtab, 2017). Micro-finance credit theory provides an approach that offers small, unsecured loans aimed at improving the economic status of the borrowers and fostering entrepreneurial activities among them (Armendáriz and Morduch, 2017). In relation to the three dimensions of microfinancing terms and condition vis a vis the performance of SMEs, Microfinance credit theory support the use of interest rate, loan duration and recovery strategies to jointly shape SMEs' performance by balancing lender sustainability with borrower capacity.

2.3 Empirical Review

Relevant studies that examined the effect microfinancing terms and conditions are reviewed as follows with each dimension of microfinancing in relation to performance sequence of paragraphs. With respect to the effect of interest rates on the performance, Adewale and Adeyemo (2024) conducted a study in Osun State, Nigeria by evaluating the impact of microfinance bank loans (interest rate) on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) performance. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study sampled 150 SMEs from the primary data were collected and analysed using regression analysis. the study found that while microfinance loans enhance productivity and business expansion, high-interest rates create significant constraint to effective loan utilization as it has negative effect on performance. Similarly, Pedersen (2023) explored the broader implications of microfinance on small business development in Nigeria over a period of 30 years (1992-2021), using secondary data from the Central Bank of Nigeria. Employing econometric techniques like unit root tests and co-integration analysis, the study concluded that while microfinancing activities have positive influences on business growth, high interest rate has significant negative on performance. Conversely, Akinyede and Iriobe (2023) investigated the effect of formal microfinance banking practices on the performance of SMEs in Osun State. This study utilizes a survey research design and employs a purposive sampling technique to select 200 respondents from the study population to whom questionnaire were administered. Data for the study were analyzed using the ordinary least square regression. The study established that interest rate has positive relationship on the performance of the MSEs studied. This implies that the effect of interest rate on the business performance is mix.

On the effects of loan duration on the performance of businesses, Akram et al. (2023) studied the effect of loan characteristics and their influence on microfinance contract performance in Pakistan. Using survey research design and regression analysis, it was found that loan duration has significant effect on business performance and also mediates the relationship between loan terms and business. This shows that longer loan duration improves repayment rates by reducing pressure on businesses to repay within shorter periods, thus improving client-business

performance. Similarly, Adnan and Kumar (2024) conducted a study in Indonesia that focusing on the role of microfinancing financial literacy knowledge transfer and risk attitudes on the performance of 149 selected microenterprises. Findings from the study through regression analysis revealed that financial literacy transfer significantly and positively influenced the performance of the microenterprises by enabling better financial decision-making and resource management. The reviewed studies show that there is a consensus on the positive and significant effect of loan duration on the performance of business.

Loan recovery strategies represent another proxy of microfinancing used in this study. Amoah (2024) conducted an empirical analysis of debt recovery strategy effectiveness and implementation challenges on some selected SMEs in Ashanti Region, Ghana. Loan recovery was assessed through different debt-recovery strategies (regular borrower follow-up, flexible rescheduling, group-monitoring) used by MFIs and their impact on non-performing loans (NPLs), portfolio quality and SMEs performance. The study employed mixed method approach and collected primary data from the MFIs operating in the Ashanti region. Descriptive statistics, OLS and multivariate regression were employed to analyse the data. The findings revealed that Proactive, relationship-based recovery practices (regular borrower follow-up, flexible rescheduling, group-monitoring) were associated with lower NPL ratios and improved portfolio and SMEs performance. Similarly, Ashemeza and Turyamushanga (2025) evaluated the effect of credit risk management (appraisal, collateral rules, monitoring, and formal recovery procedures) on the loan recovery rates and institutional financial performance of microfinance institutions loans in Ishaka-Bushenyi, Uganda. The study employed a case study/cross-sectional survey of one SACCO and nearby MFIs and regression analysis linking presence/strength of credit-risk controls to measured loan recovery ratios and NPL levels; triangulated with staff and borrower interviews. Findings revealed that strong credit-risk control measures (rigorous appraisal, periodic monitoring, clearly codified recovery procedures) had a statistically significant positive association with higher recovery rates and lower provisioning.

3.0 Methodology

This study utilized cross-sectional survey research design and collected primary data from 284 (Bosso LGA 72; Edati LGA 113 and Mariga LGA 99) sampled women Shae Buter producers that were purposively selected for the study. The psychometric properties of the instrument were confirmed via instrument validation by experts in both academia and practice while, instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha test on the 10% 30 respondents (approximately) used for the pilot testing with a Cronbach Alpha result of 0.841. This indicate that the instrument is reliable because the reliability result is above the minimum threshold of 0.70 (Amoah (2024)). Data for the study were collected using questionnaire (ranked in 5-point Likert scale) administered through the help of research assistants. The study employed correlation, Variance inflation Factor (VIF) and regression analysis to analyze the data for the study. There are two main variables used in this study: Dependent variable proxied by sale/output and the independent variable which consists of 3 proxies (Interest rate, loan duration and loan recovery strategies). This study adapts the model of Amran and Mwasiaji (2019) to establish the effect of microfinancing on of women in shea butter production in Niger state. the original model of Amran and Mwasiaji (2019) is stated thus:

$$FP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FA_i + \beta_2 SM_i + \beta_3 FK_i + \beta_4 LR_i + \varepsilon$$

Where: FP = Financial Performance of SMEs; FA= Financial accessibility; SM = Savings mobilization; FK = Financial knowledge; LR = Lending rates; ε = Error term Where

The model is further modified to capture the model for this study which result into the following model.

$$OPS_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IR_i + \beta_2 LD_i + \beta_3 LRS_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where: β_0 = constant term, $\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = coefficient of the independent variables, ε_i = error term, OPS_i = Quantity produced/Sold, IR_i = Interest Rate, LD_i = Loan Duration and LRS_i = Loan recovery strategy.

4.0 Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the results of the analysis.

4.1 Correlation and VIF Results

The correlation among the variables and the VIF result is summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Correlation and VIF Results

	OPS	IR	LD	LRS	VIF
OPS	1.000				
IR	-0.121	1.000			1.342
LD	0.371	-0.069	1.000		1.254
LRS	0.011	0.271	0.035	1.000	1.532
				Mean VIF	1.376

Source: Generated from the questionnaire through 'Stata' (2025)

The correlation result of the variables shown in Table 4.1 discloses the strength and direction of relationship among the variables. The results of the correlated variables show that loan duration, savings mobilization and financial knowledge are positively correlated with output/sales. However, interest rate has negative correlation with output/sales. This implies that all the variables except for interest rates move in same direction while interest rate moves in opposite direction with output/sales. On the whole, the correlation result discloses absence of multicollinearity. The highest correlation value of 0.371 which is between loan duration and output/sales is less than the maximum of 0.8 ceiling (Hafis et al., 2024). The absence of multicollinearity was further corroborated through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test where all the values are below the maximum threshold 10 for the mean VIF (Hafis et al., 2024)

4.2 Regression Results

The regression result of the study which is based on the model specified in chapter three is presented in Table 3.

Table 4.2: Regression Results

Variables	Coef.	P-val.
IR	-0.170**	0.020
LD	1.568***	0.000
LRS	0.370***	0.000
FK	0.076	0.175
R ²	0.794	
F-stat	26.29	0.000

Source: Generated through 'Stata' (2025)

The result revealed an R² of 0.794 for the model which indicates that approximately 80% of the variation in the dependent variable (output and sales) of the women in shea-butter business in Bosso, Mariga and Edati local government areas is explained by the proxies of the dependent

variable (Interest rate, loan duration and loan recovery strategy. The f-statistics value of 26.29 with a p-value of 0.000 indicate the joint significance of microfinancing on the women-led shea butter businesses in Niger state. This therefore shows the fitness of the model. The level of significance of each proxy of the independent variable on the dependent variable is indicated in asterisk (*) with three asterisks (***) denoting significance at 1% and two asterisks (**) denoting significance at 5%.

4.3 Discussion of Results

Considering the regression result in Table 2, the effect of microfinancing on the performance women-led shea-butter businesses in Bosso, Mariga and Edati local government areas respectively, is discussed and linked with previous studies.

i. Interest rate and performance

The result captured in Table 3 revealed that interest rate has a negative coefficient of -0.170 and a p-value of 0.020. The result suggests that a reduction in interest rate has a significant increase in the performance of the women-led shea-butter businesses in Bosso, Mariga and Edati local government areas, respectively. In other word, interest rate charged by the micro finance institutions significantly improved performance. This implies that the micro finance institutions charge reasonably low interest rates that encouraged women in shea butter businesses to take loan for further investment in growth, innovation and operational activities of their respective busiessses. This finding is in line with the submission Adewale and Adeyemo (2024) but contradicts Akinyede and Iriobe (2023).

ii. Loan duration and performance

Table 2 reveals that loan duration has positive coefficient of 0.568 and a p-value of 0.000 ($P < 0.01$) in relation to performance (output and sales). This implies that the loan duration offered by the microfinance banks has significantly driven and positively influenced output and sales of shea-butter in the three local government areas. This further suggests that, longer loan duration offered by must have helped the women in the business in reducing the amount and number of periodic repayments, thereby improving cash flow, allocate more resources toward expanding investments in shea-butter business, efficiently manage their working capital and plan for repayment in good time. This finding is consistent with those of Akram et al. (2023) Adnan and Kumar (2024).

iii. Loan Recovery Strategies and performance

Table 2 shows that loan recovery strategies employed by the microfinance banks have positive coefficient of 0.370 and a p-value of 0.000 ($P < 0.001$) in connection with the output and sales (performance) of women-led shea-butter business in Bosso, Edati and Mariga local government areas on Niger state. This indicates that the banks possibly deployed considerate loan recovery strategies to safeguard loan portfolio quality as well as ensuring that loan terms are less stringent and carryout careful assessment on the character of the prospective borrowers. The bank may have also engaged in monitoring of clients' businesses, give regular repayment reminders, use of group or joint-liability schemes that harness peer monitoring and peer pressure and continuous borrower engagement to sustain repayment discipline and early detection of distress. This significant effect of loan recovery strategies as documented in this study is in tandem with the conclusion of Amoah (2024).

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the effect of microfinancing on the performance of women-led shea-butter businesses in Bosso, Edati and Mariga local government areas of Niger state. This study is considered necessary and timely due to the unstable and sometimes dwindling level of output/sales made by women in shea-butter business, even with the abundance of shea trees in the three local government areas covered by the study. The poor performance was primarily linked microfinancing because availability of funds on favourable terms and condition could

help in improving investment, output and sale of shea-butter in the three local government areas. The result from the study revealed that microfinancing proxies (interest rates, loan duration and loan recovery strategies) have significant effect on the performance of women in shea-butter business in Bosso, Edati and Mariga local government areas of Niger state. Conclusively, a reduction in interest rate, extension in repayment period and good loan recovery strategies are crucial in driving the performance of women-led shea butter businesses in Niger State, Nigeria.

Consequent upon the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations among others have been put forward to help drive healthy financial intermediation of the microfinance banks as well as the performance of women-led shea-butter businesses in Bosso, Mariga and Edati local government areas of Niger state.

- i. Considering significant negative effect of interest rate on the performance of women in shea-butter business in Bosso, Mariga and Edati local government areas of Niger state, it is recommended the banks should continue lower the cost of capital/borrowing (interest rate) in order to further spur borrowing for investment and business expansion. This can be done by giving special and competitive interest rate consideration to the women in shea-butter butter business to enable them harness the abundant presence of shea-trees/nuts, improve their performance and pay back the loan with ease.
- ii. The banks should continue to provide a repayment time-lag that commensurate with the peculiar nature (season and off-season) of the shea-butter business such that the women are given ample time to pay back their load without putting the two parties in liquidity crunch. This will no doubt encourage the women to give the desired attention to the growth of the business and think less of or be consumed by the fear having to pay the loan within the shortest period of time especially during the off-peak period.
- iii. The banks are encouraged to sustain their flexible and customer friendly loan recovery strategies through mentorship, advisory services, loan restructuring, keep regular communication with customers and deploy legal mean as the last resort. While this helps build friendly atmosphere between the banks and the borrowers, it can also encourage timely repayment of loan by the customers

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