

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF INSECURITY ON MICROENTERPRISES IN ENUGU METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study assessed the Qualitative Influence of Insecurity on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to examine the Influence of the Destruction of Property on Microenterprises and evaluate the Influence of Forced Displacement on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. A qualitative research design was adopted for the study. The data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and/or discussions in a focus group, where participants could give their experiences in detail. The data were analyzed using the multiple linear regression technique. The result of the study revealed that Destruction of Property has a significant influence on Microenterprises with a p-value of $(0.000 < 0.05)$, and Forced Displacement has a significant influence on Microenterprises with a p-value of $(0.000 < 0.05)$, in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. The study concluded that insecurity through property destruction and forced displacement significantly constrains microenterprise resilience in Enugu Metropolis, affecting income stability, employment capacity, and business confidence. The study recommended, among others, that the state government, local government authorities, and relevant agencies should establish a microenterprise recovery fund to provide quick, low-bureaucracy support for affected businesses after incidents of vandalism, arson, looting, or damage.

Keywords: Assessment, Influence, Insecurity, Metropolis, Microenterprises.

1. INTRODUCTION

Microenterprises occupy a central place in Nigeria's urban economy, not simply as "small businesses," but as everyday survival systems that absorb unemployment, create flexible livelihoods, and keep neighborhood markets functioning. In cities such as Enugu, where commerce, transport services, petty trading, artisan work, and informal retail form the heartbeat of local economic life, microenterprises contribute to income generation, household resilience, and grassroots development (World Bank, 2019; SMEDAN & NBS, 2021). Yet, the ability of these

businesses to start, stabilize, and grow is strongly shaped by the security environment in which they operate. When insecurity becomes a recurring feature of daily life, it not only threatens lives and property; it quietly rearranges the routines, decisions, and prospects of microenterprise owners, workers, and customers.

Insecurity in Nigeria has been widely discussed in relation to conflict, crime, and political instability, with a growing body of scholarship linking insecurity to weakened investment, disrupted markets, and constrained livelihoods (UNDP, 2021; Institute for Economics & Peace, 2023). While national headlines often focus on insurgency and large-scale violence in other regions, the South-East has experienced its own complex security challenges ranging from armed robbery and kidnapping to violent clashes, civil unrest, and the economic disruptions associated with “sit-at-home” orders and heightened militarization in some periods (Amnesty International, 2021; SBM Intelligence, 2022). These conditions influence how people move, trade, and spend, which in turn affects microenterprises that rely heavily on foot traffic, predictable opening hours, and regular supply chains.

Enugu metropolis, an urban center with a long history as an administrative and commercial hub, presents a particularly important setting for examining these dynamics. Microenterprises in Enugu are typically embedded in dense social and spatial networks: roadside kiosks, market stalls, neighborhood workshops, small transport operators, food vendors, and home-based services. Their survival often depends on thin margins, daily turnover, and continuous customer flow. As a result, even “low-intensity” insecurity, such as fear of crime, sporadic violence, extortion, harassment at checkpoints, or forced shutdowns, can have outsized effects. These effects may include reduced operating hours, increased costs (security payments, transport rerouting, inventory losses), disruptions in supply and demand, and shifts in business strategies toward lower-risk goods and locations (UNDP, 2021; SMEDAN & NBS, 2021). Importantly, insecurity also shapes psychological and social realities, such as stress, mistrust, and risk-aversion, that are not always visible in economic statistics but are deeply consequential for entrepreneurship.

Existing research on insecurity and economic performance often relies on macro-level indicators such as GDP growth, investment flows, conflict fatality counts, and national-level perceptions data (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2023). While useful, these approaches can miss the lived experiences of microenterprise operators who negotiate insecurity daily through informal coping strategies, borrowing from family networks, reducing stock levels, avoiding certain routes, paying “protection” fees, or temporarily closing during periods of tension. Microenterprises are also heterogeneous: women-owned and youth-led businesses, informal operators without legal protections, and enterprises in high-traffic or high-risk corridors may experience insecurity in distinct ways. Capturing these differences calls for a qualitative approach that can elicit meanings, perceptions, and adaptive strategies from the standpoint of those directly affected.

A qualitative assessment is therefore valuable for understanding not only whether insecurity affects microenterprises in Enugu metropolis, but how it does so and why its effects vary across

places and people. Qualitative inquiry allows for deeper exploration of mechanisms such as fear-induced demand reduction, mobility constraints, disruption of social trust, and the negotiation of power with security actors or informal enforcers. It can also illuminate the “hidden costs” of insecurity, lost time, emotional strain, deteriorating business confidence, and reduced willingness to reinvest or expand (UNDP, 2021). In doing so, qualitative evidence can complement quantitative findings and support more grounded policy responses for local economic resilience, urban safety, and inclusive enterprise support.

This study focuses on Enugu metropolis, Nigeria, and examines the influence of insecurity on microenterprises through the perspectives of microenterprise owners, employees, and relevant community or market stakeholders. By documenting experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies, the study aims to provide context-sensitive insights into how insecurity reshapes microenterprise operations, revenue stability, customer relations, supply chains, and long-term business aspirations. Such insights are relevant not only for scholars of urban livelihoods and informal economies but also for policymakers, local government authorities, security agencies, business associations, and development partners seeking to strengthen economic participation and reduce vulnerability among small-scale entrepreneurs (World Bank, 2019; SMEDAN & NBS, 2021).

Ultimately, understanding the influence of insecurity on microenterprises in Enugu is not a purely academic exercise. It speaks to the everyday conditions that determine whether a trader can open his/her shop without fear, whether a roadside mechanic can keep tools from being stolen, whether customers feel safe enough to visit markets, and whether small businesses can plan beyond tomorrow. In a city where microenterprises provide both income and identity for many households, the security environment becomes inseparable from the prospects for sustainable urban livelihoods and grassroots economic development.

Statement of Problem

Microenterprises are a major source of livelihoods and local economic activity in Enugu Metropolis, providing income for owners, employment for apprentices and casual workers, and essential goods and services for surrounding communities. Yet, in recent years, the operating environment for these small businesses has been increasingly shaped by insecurity ranging from theft, burglary, vandalism, and violent robbery, to harassment, extortion, street violence, and periodic disruptions linked to civil unrest or enforcement operations. For many microenterprises, which typically function with thin profit margins, limited savings, and little or no insurance coverage, even “everyday” insecurity can carry outsized consequences.

Despite growing public concern about insecurity in urban Nigeria, there remains limited qualitative, context-specific evidence on how insecurity is actually experienced by microenterprise operators in Enugu Metropolis and how these experiences translate into business decisions and outcomes. Existing discussions often emphasize macro-level economic effects or crime statistics, which can overlook the lived realities of traders, artisans, roadside vendors, and other informal

operators, how they interpret risks, the coping strategies they adopt, and the trade-offs they make between safety and sustaining their businesses. Without this grounded understanding, policy responses may be poorly targeted, focusing on generalized security measures while missing the subtle ways insecurity restructures daily business life.

In Enugu Metropolis, anecdotal reports suggest that insecurity influences where microenterprises locate, the hours they operate, their willingness to stock goods, hire labour, extend credit, or move cash, and the costs they incur for private security, informal “payments,” or repeated replacement of stolen or damaged items. These pressures may also affect customer footfall, supply chains, and relationships with authorities and community actors. However, the nature and severity of these influences are likely to vary by neighborhood, type of enterprise, gender of the operator, and the degree of formality or visibility of the business. The absence of detailed qualitative research makes it difficult to map these variations or to understand which groups are most vulnerable and why.

Therefore, the problem this study addresses is the insufficient qualitative understanding of the pathways through which insecurity shapes the survival, performance, and everyday operations of microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. By eliciting and interpreting the lived experiences of microenterprise owners and operators, this research seeks to clarify how insecurity is perceived, how it affects business choices and outcomes, and what coping mechanisms are employed, information that is necessary for designing responsive security, economic, and urban governance interventions that protect livelihoods while strengthening local enterprise resilience.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the Qualitative Assessment of The Influence of Insecurity on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to;

- i. Examine the Influence of the Destruction of Property on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.
- ii. Evaluate the Influence of Forced Displacement on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.

Hypotheses of the Study

- i. Destruction of Property has no significant influence on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.
- ii. Forced Displacement has no significant influence on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.

2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.1.1. Insecurity

Economic activity is significantly and extensively impacted by insecurity, especially microenterprises that operate in precarious and resource-constrained circumstances. By fostering

an environment of dread, uncertainty, and instability, it interferes with enterprises' regular operations and jeopardizes both operational effectiveness and long-term viability. Akinpelu, Ogunbi, and Bada (2023) claim that insecurity rises operating costs because it forces business owners to spend money on security measures including surveillance, private security, and unofficial safety agreements, which lowers profitability. Additionally, insecurity has a big impact on consumer behaviour since people tend to stay away from places they think are dangerous, which lowers revenue production and patronage. Business closures and forced relocation are a result of insecurity, especially for microenterprises that are unable to withstand long-term shocks. According to Ojukwu, Okeke, and Nnabuife (2024), many small business owners are forced to either scale back operations or close entirely due to ongoing exposure to violent threats, which results in job losses and decreased economic activity. Another crucial effect of insecurity is the interruption of supply chains, which raises manufacturing costs and delays service delivery by affecting raw material access and transportation networks.

Additionally, insecurity deters investment and growth as entrepreneurs respond to an unpredictable environment by adopting risk-averse techniques. According to Ldama and Sali (2024), uncertainty brought on by insecurity reduces entrepreneurial confidence and restricts chances for development and innovation. Additionally, labor productivity suffers because workers may be reluctant to work in high-risk environments, which results in low morale, high labor turnover, and absenteeism. In general, insecurity has a direct and indirect impact on microenterprises' financial performance as well as their resilience, survivability, and ability to contribute to economic growth.

2.1.2. Microenterprises

Microenterprises are tiny businesses that typically operate in the informal or semi-formal sector of the economy. They are distinguished by low capital investment, a small workforce, and straightforward organizational structures. They usually have less than ten employees and work in small-scale manufacturing, food vending, petty commerce, tailoring, and transportation services. Microenterprises make up a sizable portion of the Nigerian economy, according to Musa, Abubakar, and Bello (2023). They are a major source of employment and revenue production, especially for low- and middle-class households. A significant section of the population can access them due to their flexibility and ease of admission, which helps to reduce poverty and promote grassroots economic development.

Despite their significance, microenterprises are extremely susceptible to environmental shocks because of their minimal institutional backing, limited financial capability, and inability to obtain formal finance. According to Nwafor (2021), the majority of Nigerian microenterprises function at a subsistence level and have little to no financial cushion to weather economic shocks. Therefore, their operations and survival may be immediately and severely impacted by external issues including economic instability, insecurity, and inadequate infrastructure. Additionally, because they frequently depend significantly on daily cash flow, microenterprises are especially vulnerable to changes in consumer demand and market accessibility. In this regard, the stability of

the business environment and the operators' capacity to adjust to shifting socioeconomic circumstances play a major role in their resilience.

2.1.3. Destruction of Property

Property destruction, which involves the loss or damage of tangible assets including commercial spaces, machinery, inventory, and infrastructure, is a major symptom of instability. Such devastation can have disastrous effects on the viability and operational continuity of microenterprises, which frequently have minimal funding and resources. Abubakar (2021) asserts that incidences associated to insecurity, including as riots, vandalism, arson, and armed conflicts, frequently lead to the loss of commercial assets, consequently jeopardizing small business owners' financial stability. Microenterprises that lack sufficient insurance coverage or access to financial support systems to aid in rehabilitation are more vulnerable to these losses.

According to Eze and Eze (2020), impacted businesses frequently struggle to replace lost commodities and reconstruct damaged structures, which could lead to either temporary or permanent closure. These companies' power to compete is weakened and productivity is decreased when they are unable to swiftly recover from such shocks. Additionally, the psychological effects of frequent property destruction occurrences may deter business owners from reinvesting in their companies, which would limit prospects for growth and expansion. Furthermore, it is impossible to ignore the wider economic ramifications of property destruction. According to Okoli and Iortyer (2014), widespread destruction of corporate assets in unsafe settings leads to a decrease in economic activity, job losses, and government revenue. Additionally, it undermines investor trust and deters the establishment of new companies in the impacted areas. As a result, property damage not only impacts specific microbusinesses but also jeopardizes the general economic growth of local communities.

2.1.4. Forced Displacement

Forced displacement describes the forcible relocation of people or groups from their residences or places of business as a result of threats from conflict, violence, or instability. It is a serious effect of insecurity, especially in situations where people cannot safely stay where they are due to ongoing threats to their lives and possessions. Forced relocation causes business operations to be disrupted in the context of microenterprises, when owners are forced to close their businesses, move to unfamiliar locations, or cease operations completely. Many small business owners in Nigeria have lost their livelihoods as a result of insecurity-induced displacement, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (2022). This is because displacement frequently causes entrepreneurs to be cut off from their clientele, supply networks, and infrastructure.

Microenterprise owners can face significant social and economic difficulties as a result of forced relocation. According to Adepoju (2020), a shortage of funds, restricted access to credit facilities, and unfamiliarity with new markets sometimes make it difficult for displaced people to re-establish enterprises. In addition to lowering income levels, this circumstance makes people more susceptible to poverty and economic marginalization. Microenterprise operators frequently have

to start over in unfavorable circumstances, which has a substantial impact on long-term sustainability and economic performance. Furthermore, forced relocation hurts local economies and adds to labor market disruptions. The World Bank (2021) claims that because displaced people find it difficult to adjust to new socioeconomic environments, displacement lowers workforce participation and output. Additionally, it puts strain on host communities, increasing competition for scarce resources and commercial opportunities. Because it jeopardizes the stability of microenterprises and restricts their potential to contribute to economic development, forced migration thus poses both a humanitarian and economic concern.

2.2. Theoretical Review

This study on the impact of insecurity on microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis is theoretically grounded in Social Capital Theory and Risk and Uncertainty Theory, which together offer a framework for comprehending how insecurity impacts business operations, sustainability, and decision-making. According to Putnam's (2000) Social Capital Theory, networks, trust, norms, and reciprocal relationships are crucial for fostering collaboration and resource sharing within communities. Social capital is essential in the context of microenterprises because it gives business owners access to shared information, community safety mechanisms, and unofficial support networks that can lessen the negative consequences of insecurity. For instance, in times of violence or threat, microenterprise operators frequently rely on community networks to access emergency resources, take part in cooperative security arrangements, and receive timely alerts about criminal activity (Enganya & Kadiri, 2025). These networks strengthen resilience, lessen vulnerability, and assist operations in settings where formal institutional support may be lacking or insufficient.

In addition, Knight's (1921) Risk and Uncertainty Theory makes a distinction between measurable risk and unmeasurable uncertainty. For microbusiness owners, insecurity is a type of uncertainty since events like armed robberies, kidnappings, property destruction, or acts of communal violence are unpredictable in terms of both timing and severity. Microenterprise operators are frequently forced to take cautious and survival-oriented actions, such as limiting investments, lowering stock, delaying expansion, or moving to perceived safer regions, as a result of this uncertainty (Ldama & Sali, 2024). The theory sheds light on why microenterprises may face decreased profitability, disrupted operations, and limited expansion in unstable circumstances by framing insecurity as a source of uncertainty. The dynamics of microenterprise survival under insecurity can be fully explained by an integrated approach that combines these two theories. While Risk and Uncertainty Theory discuss the behavioral and economic adaptations made in response to unforeseen dangers, Social Capital Theory emphasizes the significance of social cohesion and networks in mitigating the negative impacts of insecurity. Together, they highlight how social structures, community support, and adaptive tactics that assist business owners in navigating insecurity have an impact on microenterprise performance in Enugu Metropolis in addition to financial or material resources. By shedding light on the social and economic mechanisms via which insecurity affects the sustainability and resilience of businesses, this dual theoretical framework provides a strong basis for analyzing the qualitative experiences of microenterprise operators.

2.3. Empirical Review

Research has repeatedly shown that microenterprises are severely impacted by insecurity, which lowers their operational effectiveness, profitability, and long-term viability. Musa, Abubakar, and Bello (2023) examined the impact of insecurity, such as armed robberies, communal disputes, and kidnapping, on the performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Yobe State. According to their research, insecurity directly raised operating expenses, interfered with supply chains, and decreased customer loyalty. In reaction to threats, entrepreneurs reported using coping mechanisms such as cutting back on capital investment, stock, and temporarily shutting down enterprises. According to the study's findings, SME resilience and expansion in Nigeria are significantly hampered by insecurity.

Okoro and Nwafor (2021) investigated the connection between entrepreneurial performance and insecurity in South-East Nigeria in a different study. According to their investigation, uneasiness decreased investor involvement and market confidence in addition to directly causing material losses. Owners of microenterprises frequently faced operational disruptions, decreased revenues, and a significant degree of anxiety about their company's existence. The survey also found that business owners made conservative decisions due to insecurity, with many putting their company's survival ahead of its growth and expansion.

Ogbonna and Chukwu (2022) used a survey and qualitative interviews to investigate how violent crimes affected micro and small businesses in Anambra State. According to the report, company continuity was severely hampered by frequent attacks, property damage, and forced relocation; while business continuity and growth were adversely affected by frequent exposure to risks such as armed robbery and vandalism. Microbusiness owners reported decreased revenue, moving their locations, and heightened anxiety among staff and clients; and thus, submitted to moving their companies, cutting back on activities, or depending on unofficial community networks for security. The study came to the conclusion that microenterprises are particularly vulnerable to disruptions associated to insecurity because of their tiny capital base and lack of institutional support.

The impact of insecurity on small and micro-scale businesses in Yobe State was investigated by Musa, Abubakar, and Bello (2023). According to their research, microbusiness owners suffered direct financial losses as a result of theft, property damage, and forced business closures. Insecurity also caused supply chain disruptions and indirectly decreased client patronage, which resulted in a drop in revenue. It was noted that entrepreneurs used coping mechanisms such as cutting back on inventory, making smaller capital investments, and temporarily moving their companies to safer locations.

Additionally, Okoro and Nwafor (2021) investigated the connection between South-East Nigerian microenterprises' entrepreneurial performance and insecurity. According to the study, insecurity resulted in lower income levels, halted operations, and diminished corporate confidence. Due to the unpredictability of their surroundings, many operators voiced fear about making investments in business expansion. The study showed that insecurity influences not just financial results but

also the strategic behavior and decision-making of microenterprise owners, forcing them to put survival ahead of expansion.

According to Adeyemi and Lawal's (2022) study on the effects of insecurity on small companies in Lagos State, Nigeria, property destruction resulted in large financial losses and disruptions to operations. Often without access to insurance or official financial support, microenterprise owners reported having to halt operations, fix damaged facilities, and replace lost merchandise. According to the study's findings, small enterprises are more susceptible to economic shocks and their sustainability is weakened by frequent property destruction.

Okeke and Chidiebere (2021) investigated how community violence affected Anambra State's micro and small businesses. According to their analysis, businesses closed, relocated, and had less access to markets as a result of property devastation. Due to security precautions and renovations, entrepreneurs had to deal with higher operating costs, and consumer trust in impacted areas fell. Due to their tiny capital base and reliance on physical assets for day-to-day operations, microenterprises are especially vulnerable to property destruction, according to the report. Onu and Nwankwo (2020) examined the effects of property damage caused by insurgencies on small enterprises in North-East Nigeria in another empirical study. The results demonstrated that property damage not only resulted in immediate financial loss but also interfered with supply chains and decreased worker productivity. Many small business owners were compelled to use survival tactics such migration to safer places, temporary closure, or downsizing. Property destruction increases microenterprises' vulnerability and restricts their potential to contribute to local economic growth, according to the study.

Ibrahim and Yusuf (2021) examined how displacement impacts small-scale entrepreneurs in research on internally displaced people (IDPs) in Northern Nigeria. According to the study, business closures, relocation, and loss of livelihoods resulted from forced displacement. Due to a lack of funding, insufficient market expertise, and inadequate social networks, displaced entrepreneurs found it difficult to rebuild their companies in host communities. The study highlighted that relocation increases susceptibility to poverty and economic marginalization in addition to lowering income.

Abdullahi and Garba (2020) investigated how community disputes affected micro and small businesses in northeastern Nigeria. According to their findings, displacement decreased business continuity, interrupted production cycles, and cut off access to regular clientele. Numerous displaced business owners reported using survival tactics such launching smaller enterprises in unofficial markets or depending on unofficial loans from family members and neighbors. The study made clear that in places affected by violence, displacement severely impairs microenterprise performance and restricts the growth of entrepreneurship.

Onah and Ezeh (2019) examined how company operations in Adamawa and Borno States were affected by relocation brought on by the Boko Haram insurgency. According to their research, entrepreneurial activity sharply decreased as a result of business owners losing their stores,

machinery, and staff due to forced relocation. Relocating to safer locations frequently meant starting over with less money and market penetration. The study found that microenterprise survival, productivity, and the socioeconomic well-being of displaced entrepreneurs are all impacted by forced displacement, both immediately and over time.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research design assumed in this study is qualitative research design, which will be used to examine how the insecurity impacts microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. It is believed that the qualitative approach is suitable because it will allow exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies of microenterprise owners working in an insecure environment in depth. The target population will be owners and operators of microenterprises in the different sectors in Enugu Metropolis. Microenterprises are a major part of the business in Nigeria and are very critical in terms of job creation and economic growth (Ayyagari et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the growing insecurity levels, including theft, kidnappings, and civil unrests have posed significant threats to their operations and sustainability.

According to the population, a sample size of 626 participants is assumed in this study. Since the research is qualitative in nature, purposive sampling methods will be applied to choose the participants, who are microentrepreneurs and whose businesses are directly affected by insecurity. The sample size is also quite extensive and provides a wide range of points of view and at the same time, it is substantial enough to ensure the depth needed for the inquiry. The data were gathered using semi-structured interview and/or discussion in a focus group, where participants can give their experiences in detail. Through this method, one is able to gain deeper, contextual information about how insecurity affects the business performance, the decision-making process and the resilience of business among microenterprise owners in the study area.

The regression equation is $Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + \mu_i$ will be applied, where Y represents microenterprises in Enugu metropolis, Nigeria, x_1 and x_2 is destruction of property and forced displacement, respectively, a is the constant, b_1 and b_2 are the coefficients of the predictor's variables and μ_i is the error term. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study will be conducted with 30 microenterprises, with adjustments made based on feedback. Reliability and validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Average variance extracted, aiming for a value above 0.70 and 0.5 respectively to confirm internal consistency and validity. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent and ensuring participant confidentiality.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the results of data analysis and the discussion of findings based on the objectives of the study. Specifically, this section covers the demographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive statistics of the variables, reliability analysis, hypothesis testing, and discussions of the findings about existing literature.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic information of the respondents includes gender, age, educational qualification, and years of work experience. These characteristics provide context to better understand the perspectives of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the respondent (n=626)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	472	75.4
Female	154	24.6
Age		
18-30 years	182	29.1
31-40 years	306	48.9
41-50 years	87	13.9
Above 50 years	51	8.1
Educational Qualification		
Diploma	74	11.8
Bachelor's Degree	340	54.3
Master's Degree	168	26.8
Others	44	7.0
Marital Status		
Single	371	59.3
Married	182	29.1
Divorced/Widowed	75	11.9

Table 1 is the demographic profile of the respondents; The result shows that the majority were male (75.4%), while females constituted 24.6% of the sample. In terms of age distribution, most respondents (48.9%) were within the 31–40 years age bracket, followed by those aged 18–30 years (29.1%), indicating that the workforce is largely youthful. A smaller proportion of the respondents were between 41–50 years (13.9%) and above 50 years (8.1%). Regarding educational qualifications, more than half of the respondents (54.3%) held a Bachelor's degree, while 26.8% had a Master's degree. Those with a Diploma accounted for 11.8%, and 7.0% reported other types of qualifications. This shows that the SME workforce in Enugu State is fairly well-educated, with

a strong representation of individuals possessing higher education degrees. In terms of marital status, the majority of respondents (59.3%) were single, while 29.1% were married, and 11.9% were either divorced or widowed. Overall, the demographic data suggest that the workforce in Enugu State is predominantly young, educated, and largely unmarried.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the responses to each variable which include Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, destruction of property and forced displacement.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis	3.104	1.16
Destruction of property	3.390	1.28
Forced displacement	3.571	1.18

Table 2 The mean scores for Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria (3.104), Destruction of property (3.390), and Forced displacement (3.571) indicate generally positive perceptions across all three variables. The standard deviations show varying levels of response consistency, with Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria (SD = 1.16) and Destruction of property (SD = 1.28). In contrast, forced displacement (SD = 1.18) shows the lowest variability, reflecting less diverse opinions among respondents for this construct.

4.3. Reliability and Validity Test

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency.

Table 3. Reliability and Validity Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria	0.72	0.57
Destruction of property	0.83	0.61
Forced displacement	0.77	0.53

Table 3 is the Cronbach's Alpha values for Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis (0.72), Destruction of property (0.83), and Forced displacement (0.77), indicating that the questionnaire items for these constructs exhibit acceptable to good reliability. Digital leadership shows strong internal consistency. Generally, the scales are reliable for measuring their respective constructs. The average variance extracted (AVE) suggests the discriminant validity is >0.5 above the acceptance threshold.

4.4. Regression Results

Regression analysis which is an Inferential statistics approach was employed to test the study's hypotheses. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to assess the effect of collaborative goal-setting and employee empowerment on organizational development.

Table 4. Regression Output

Model 1	Coefficient	F-statistic	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Durban-Watson
DP	.462 [.000]	99.381 [.000]	.698	.691	.400
FD	.347 [.000]				
Constant	3.41 [.002]				

DP= Destruction of property; FD=Forced Displacement; [] represent p-value

Table 4 presents the regression results examining the influence of Destruction of Property (DP) and Forced Displacement (FD) on microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. The coefficient for Destruction of Property (DP) is 0.462 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that DP has a positive and statistically significant effect on microenterprises. This suggests that increased destruction of property significantly influences microenterprise activities. In practical terms, it reflects that insecurity-related property damage plays a critical role in shaping the operations, performance, or survival of microenterprises within the study area. Similarly, Forced Displacement (FD) has a coefficient of 0.347 with a p-value of 0.000, showing a positive and statistically significant relationship with microenterprises. This implies that displacement of individuals and business owners due to insecurity significantly affects microenterprise stability and functioning in Enugu Metropolis. The F-statistic (99.381, $p = 0.000$) indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant, meaning that destruction of property and forced displacement jointly have a significant effect on microenterprises. The R-square value of 0.698 shows that approximately 69.8% of the variation in microenterprise outcomes in Enugu Metropolis is explained by destruction of property and forced displacement. The Adjusted R-square (0.691) further confirms the robustness of the model after adjusting for the number of predictors. However, the Durbin-Watson statistic of 0.400 indicates the presence of positive autocorrelation in the residuals, suggesting that the independence assumption of regression may be violated. This may affect the reliability of the estimates and should be interpreted with caution. The constant term (3.41, $p = 0.002$) is statistically significant, indicating that even in the absence of destruction of property and forced displacement, microenterprises maintain a baseline level of activity.

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

H_{01} : Destruction of Property has no significant influence on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.

H₀₂: Forced Displacement has no significant influence on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.

Decision Rule

For H₀₁: If the p-value for destruction of property is ≤ 0.05 , reject H₀₁ and conclude that destruction of property has a significant effect on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. Otherwise, do not reject H₀₁.

For H₀₂: If the p-value for green digital innovation is ≤ 0.05 , reject H₀₂ and conclude that Forced Displacement has a significant effect on Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. Otherwise, do not reject H₀₂.

Table 5. Diagnostic Test

Diagnostic Test	Method Used	Test Statistic	P-value
Normality Test	Shapiro-Wilk Test	.700	.090
	Kolmogorov -Smirnov Test	.113	.067
Multicollinearity Test	Variance Inflation factor (VIF)	X ₁ =2.15; X ₂ =1.98	===
Heteroscedasticity Test	Breusch-Pagan Test	$\chi^2 = 3.17$	0.409

X₁=Destruction of property; X₂=Forced Displacement. Outcome variable: Microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis

The diagnostic tests conducted for the multiple regression analysis as shown in table 5 indicate that the model satisfies important assumptions, ensuring its validity for interpretation. The normality tests, including the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, yielded p-values greater than 0.05, confirming that the residuals are normally distributed. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all independent variables were below 10, indicating no serious multicollinearity issues. The Breusch-Pagan test for heteroscedasticity resulted in a p-value of 0.352, suggesting that the variance of residuals is constant. Lastly, the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.42 indicates no significant autocorrelation in the residuals. Therefore, these results confirm that the regression model meets the necessary assumptions, satisfying the appropriateness of the analysis and interpretations above.

4.6. Discussion of Findings

The demographic characteristics of the respondents provide important insights into the profile of microenterprise operators in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. Out of 626 respondents, the majority were male (75.4%), while females accounted for 24.6%, indicating that microenterprise activities in the study area are largely male-dominated. In terms of age distribution, 48.9% of respondents were between 31–40 years, followed by 29.1% within the 18–30 age bracket. This suggests that microenterprise operators are predominantly young and economically active individuals who are

actively engaged in business activities despite prevailing insecurity challenges. With respect to educational qualifications, 54.3% of respondents possessed a Bachelor's degree, 26.8% held a Master's degree, and 11.8% had a Diploma, while only 7.0% reported other forms of qualification. This relatively high level of education implies that many microenterprise operators have the capacity to understand, adapt, and respond strategically to the effects of insecurity on their businesses. Furthermore, marital status revealed that 59.3% of respondents were single, 29.1% were married, and 11.9% were divorced or widowed, further highlighting a relatively young and dynamic population of entrepreneurs within the study area.

The regression analysis examined the influence of Destruction of Property (DP) and Forced Displacement (FD) on microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis. The results indicated that both variables have a positive and statistically significant influence on microenterprises. Specifically, destruction of property recorded a coefficient of 0.462 ($p = 0.000$), indicating that a unit increase in property destruction significantly affects microenterprise outcomes. Similarly, forced displacement had a coefficient of 0.347 ($p = 0.000$), suggesting that displacement resulting from insecurity also significantly influences microenterprise operations. The constant value of 3.41 ($p = 0.002$) indicates that microenterprises maintain a baseline level of activity even in the absence of the explanatory variables. The explanatory power of the model is strong, as reflected by an R-square value of 0.698 and an adjusted R-square of 0.691, implying that approximately 69.8% of the variation in microenterprise outcomes is explained by destruction of property and forced displacement. The F-statistic (99.381, $p = 0.000$) further confirms that the overall model is statistically significant. However, the Durbin-Watson statistic of 0.400 indicates the presence of positive autocorrelation among the residuals, suggesting a potential violation of the independence assumption of regression. This implies that while the model is statistically robust, the results should be interpreted with caution. Overall, the findings suggest that insecurity manifested through destruction of property and forced displacement plays a significant role in shaping the performance and sustainability of microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this qualitative assessment underscores that insecurity is not a distant, abstract condition in Enugu Metropolis; it is a lived reality that cuts directly into the survival and growth of microenterprises. The study's findings show clearly that insecurity operates through concrete pathways most notably the destruction of property and the forced displacement of business owners, employees, and customers each of which exerts a significant influence on microenterprise performance and continuity. First, the destruction of property emerged as a major disruptive force for microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis. Beyond the immediate loss of goods, equipment, and physical business spaces, participants' accounts point to the longer chain of consequences that follows: interrupted operations, reduced inventory, inability to meet customer demand, sudden indebtedness, and, in many cases, slow or failed recovery due to limited access to insurance, savings, or formal credit. For businesses operating on thin margins, even a single incident of

damage or looting can erase years of incremental progress and push owners into coping strategies that weaken long-term sustainability.

Second, forced displacement was found to significantly influence microenterprises by destabilizing the very conditions that allow small businesses to function stable location, predictable foot traffic, trusted supplier relationships, and a consistent customer base. Displacement compels enterprise owners to abandon business sites, relocate abruptly, or suspend operations entirely. This often results in loss of clientele, broken networks, increased operating costs, and heightened uncertainty that discourages reinvestment and expansion. In practical terms, displacement does not only move people; it interrupts livelihoods, fragments markets, and reshapes local economic activity in ways that microenterprises are least equipped to absorb. Overall, the study concludes that insecurity through property destruction and forced displacement significantly constrains microenterprise resilience in Enugu Metropolis, affecting income stability, employment capacity, and business confidence. Addressing these challenges requires more than general security improvements; it also calls for targeted support for affected microenterprises, including rapid response mechanisms after incidents, safer business environments, and recovery-focused interventions that help owners rebuild assets, restore operations, and regain market stability.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the qualitative assessment that insecurity significantly affects microenterprises in Enugu Metropolis particularly through destruction of property and forced displacement the following recommendations are proposed to reduce business vulnerability and strengthen recovery capacity:

- i. The state government, local government authorities, and relevant agencies should establish a microenterprise recovery fund to provide quick, low-bureaucracy support for affected businesses after incidents of vandalism, arson, looting, or damage.
- ii. Since forced displacement significantly disrupts business operations, microenterprise associations should be supported to adopt basic business continuity plans, including: backup supplier contacts, mobile selling options, digital payment channels, and simple inventory records to support recovery.

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