

IMPACT OF CREDIT FACILITIES ON THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF MEMBERS OF WOMEN CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Credit facilities is a type of loan made in a business or corporate finance context which allow the borrowing parties to take out money over an extended period of time. Women co-operative society are a voluntary association of women who work together to promote their economic interest. This study was on the impact of credit facilities on standard of living of members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna State, Nigeria. However, this work focuses on the quality of feeding and quality of healthcare of the members of women cooperative societies in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study had two specific objectives, two research questions and two null hypotheses. The study adopted longitudinal survey design. The population was 1049 members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna State, Nigeria who benefited from credit facilities of Bank of Agriculture from 2013 to 2018. The entire population was used as sample. The instrument used for collection of data was a structured questionnaire titled Women Co-operative Society Credit Facility Questionnaire (WCSCFQ). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using paired simple t-test at 0.05 level of significance. All the hypotheses were rejected because their calculated p-values were less than the alpha value of 0.05. The findings of the study, among others showed that credit facilities improved the standard of living of the women because the feeding of members of women co-operative societies was better after benefiting the credit facilities in Kaduna state, Nigeria ($t=48.446$, $p=0.000$). Three recommendations were made, among which was that the Federal Government of Nigeria should put in more efforts into providing credit facilities to women by constantly reviewing to ensure that the purpose of the credit facilities is achieved.

Keywords: Credit Facilities, Standard of Living, Women, Co-operative Societies, Kaduna State

Introduction

Credit implies a promise by one party to pay back money borrowed for goods and services received. It is a contractual agreement in which the borrower receives something of value now and agrees to pay the lender at a later date. Credit refers to a financial agreement which allows one party to provide money or resources to another party wherein the second party does not reimburse the first immediately, but promises to do so at a later date (Ekesionye & Okolo, 2022). Credit facilities are a

type of loan made in a business or corporate finance context which allows the borrowing business or parties to take out money over an extended period of time.

Credit facilities allow co-operative societies to take out an umbrella loan such as for generating capital over an extended period of time. Credit facilities are provided by financial institutions. In this research work, Credit Facilities refer to money given to women co-operative societies from the Bank of Agriculture which helped in creating and maintaining a reasonable business size as it was used to establish and/or expand the business to take advantage of economies of scale. Credit can also be used to improve informal activity and increase efficiency, leading to an increase in standard of living.

Thus cooperative means working together. This means those who want to work together with some common economic objectives can form a society, which is termed co-operative society. A Co-operative society is a voluntary association of persons who work together to promote their economic interest. The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA, 2015) defined co-operatives as autonomous associations of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Co-operatives contribute to economic growth worldwide by creating jobs and are important for the economies of countries in areas such as food, housing and financial services. Co-operatives are viewed as important tools for improving the standard of living and working conditions of women. As co-operatives foster economies of scale, they increase the bargaining power of their members providing them with higher income and social protection among other benefits. Co-operatives accord members opportunity, protection and empowerment; they are essential in uplifting them out of poverty and improving their social status (Ogunleye, Oluwafemi, Arowolo & Odegbile, 2015). Co-operatives also play a vital role towards the empowerment of women by creating employment opportunities, access to income and credit (Meera & Gowda, 2013).

Economically, empowering women is essential to achieve broader development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, improved health care, improved education and welfare in a country. Empowering women can benefit not only the women, but the entire society. It promotes women's ability to improve their well-being while also reducing household poverty, fostering economic growth, boosting productivity, and enhancing efficiency. Economic empowerment is one of the most powerful routes for women to achieve their potential and advance their standard of living (Akerela & Adekunmbi, 2018). Since women make up the majority of the world's poor, meeting poverty-reduction goals requires addressing women and their economic empowerment (Mustapha, 2022, Okafor, 2018). The economy of a nation suffers when a substantial part of the population cannot compete equitably or realize its full potential (Boyi, 2019). Women who are economically empowered contribute more to their families' well-being, societies' and national economies. Boyi, (2019) added that women invest extra income in their children and home, providing a route to sustainable development.

Standard of living refers to an individual's level of wealth, comfort, and access to essential resources with a socio-economic class. Standard of living includes factors such as income, quality and availability of employment, class disparity, poverty rate, quality and affordability of housing and shelter, good food and nutrition, quality healthcare and education. Standard of living can also be seen as the degree of wealth and material comfort available to a person, community or a country. To improve the standard of living of particularly low income earners, the Bank of Agriculture offered credit facilities to people who were mostly in co-operative societies.

Feeding is the act or process of eating and the act of giving food to a person or people. Food is any substance that is or can be consumed by living organisms, especially by eating, in order to sustain life. Food is the third most essential need for survival, providing energy and supporting development, maintain life, or stimulate growth after air and water. Food plays an important role in the promotion of health and disease prevention and generally consists of essential nutrients such as fat, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals. Food is the primary need that man cannot do without and therefore needs food in order to achieve a healthy and productive life. Food needs to be provided adequately, in sufficient quality and quantity through food supply, (Otaha, 2013).

Besides, food and health have a strong relationship and the consumption of unwholesome food creates havoc to human. In Nigeria, according to Emmanuel & Adebayo, (2012) women play a central role in food production and a key role in food security. For example, in Nigeria, women account for approximately 70 per cent of agricultural workers and 80 per cent of food processors, therefore, increase in income of women cooperative societies have a proportional influence in the feeding of their families, (David, 2017).

The status of health is a strong indication of human development and can also serve as an indicator for poverty. Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. According to World health organization (WHO, 2018) "Health is wealth" -given that in the absence of good health, an individual or society cannot attain its full potential. An improvement in one's standard of living automatically influences the person quality of healthcare.

Bank of Agriculture (BOA) was Nigeria's leading agricultural finance institution. The product bouquet of the Bank included savings mobilization and credit delivery products. Deposit products of the Bank were: Regular Savings Account (RSA) which was available to individuals, co-operatives, Self Help Groups (SHGs), partnerships, associations, business enterprises involved in small scale arable, livestock, poultry, fish farming and agro-allied business in rural and sub-urban areas. Liberty Savings Account [for women only] targeted individual women, women co-operatives, women in Self Help Groups and women entrepreneurs who were involved in farming, agro-allied business and retail trade. Credit products of Bank of Agriculture included the credits for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Agric-businesses.

Among the key mandates of Bank of Agriculture includes; capacity development through promotion of co-operatives, provision of opportunities for self-employment and creating opportunities for group to receive loan, most especially women members of Co-operative Societies. Similarly, Bank of Agriculture promoted credit as a human right. Loans were received in a continuous sequence, with new loans becoming available as previous loans were repaid. Loans were paid back in installments.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the important role's women play in the family and society, many of them cannot afford basic necessities. This is despite government's policies and programmes to uplift their standard of living. It was observed during preliminary investigations in this study that the standard of women co-operatives in Kaduna states, had deteriorated which economic experts attribute to be as a result of the impact of global economic crises. Some of these women belonged to co-operative societies which had benefited from loans given by the Bank of Agriculture.

Literature has shown that a number of studies were carried out on co-operative women in other states of the country. Dada & Adefulu (2021) conducted research on co-operative credit facilities and members profitability in Romo division of Ogun State, Nigeria. The thrust of the study was to examine the effect of co-operative credit facilities on member's profitability in Romo division of Ogun State, Nigeria. Similarly, Ajah, Igiri & Ekpenyong (2017) carried out a study on the determinants of access to credit among rice farmers in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Ademuyiwa, Aduki, Elesho & Nweke (2018) carried out a study on contributions of co-operative societies to development in Kogi State, Nigeria. None of these studies investigated the impact of Credit facilities on women's standard of living. Based on the above background, this study aims to determine the impact of credit facilities on standard of living of members of Women's cooperative societies in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- i. Determine the impact of credit facilities on the quality of feeding among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the impact of credit facilities on the quality of healthcare among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

In line with the stated specific objectives the following research questions were formulated for the study:

- i. What is the impact of credit facilities on the quality of feeding among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the impact of credit facilities on the quality of healthcare among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

In the course of this study, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

- i. Credit facilities do not have significant impact on the quality of feeding among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria.
- ii. Credit facilities do not have significant impact on the quality of healthcare among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Over the years credit (credit facility, loan) has come to mean many different things to different people. For this reason and in order to avoid confusion, this study defines credit as the money from the lender to the borrower whether an individual, group or legal entity with the condition that it will be returned or paid at a later date sometimes with interest. According to Akerela and Adekunmbi (2018). Credit implies a promise by one party to pay another for money borrowed or goods and services received Adem, Aduku, Elesho & Nweke (2018), the provision of credit with sufficient consideration for the sector's volume and price system is a way to generate self-employment opportunities. This is because credit helps to create and maintain a reasonable business size as it is used to establish and/or expand the business to take advantage of economy of scale. It can also be used to improve informal activity and increase its efficiency (Okafor. 2018).

The use of co-operative loans varies among member to at different time. This may also be determined by the focus, location and the funding of the co-operative. For example, a co-operative that enjoys regular external funding may provide loans for a longer period than a self-financed and member promoted cooperative. A study of two self-promoted and two programme-promoted cooperatives by Ariizal & Seswandi (2019) found that programme promoted co-operatives enjoyed support in the form of grants from donors and that most members used their loan for agricultural production (23.6%), animal husbandry (22.3%) and business investment (20.8%). Adekunle & Henson (2017) findings on loan use show that 64.17% was used for trade and investment, 4.62% on children's education, 8.46% for the purchase of business inputs while 6.03% was deployed for acquisition of assets. However, the results of the study would have been further strengthened if non-members had been included in the sample. This would have provided a better understanding of the impact of the co-operatives for comparison. The use of loans showed 46% for construction of houses, 31% for children's education and 23% for family use (Dickson, Sawhil & Jeffery, 2016). Rowland (2014) found the impact of co-operatives on the employment market to be positive, citing instances where co-operatives have been used successfully to establish small-scale industries, health care centers, poultry farms and food processing plants. Furthermore, the beneficiaries of cooperative loans used the funds for businesses such as petty trading or paying their children's school fees. A study by Akingunola & Onayemi (2010) among women entrepreneurs found that loans from informal finance were used for business expansion (31%), new business (28%), working capital (27.5%), building (5%) and consumption (8.5%). Oluyombo (2010) studied the impact of savings and credit co-operative loans among monthly income earners with the aid of questionnaires and reported that participation in co-operatives assisted them to purchase household equipment and properties.

Participants were also able to take advantage of the loan facility to engage in direct and indirect investment in business activities while still retaining their jobs. The study concluded that the programme had a positive impact on the social and economic wellbeing of the members.

The living standards of individuals in a society are said to be favourable when there is adequate consumption, high educational level, proper housing conditions, ample availability of food, friendly sanitary conditions, stable or non-restricted participation in the production system, free support in the systems of social joining and opportunity of taking after to a specific school of thought and qualities comparative or diverse to those that are held by whatever is left of the general public (Hermes & Lensink, 2021). Improvement of the living standards will be assessed by examining the influence of credit facilities on standard of living of Members of Women Co-operative Societies in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The access to basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter, quality health care and education will be used as the indicators of checking the quality of the living standards. The respondents will be asked about their personal thoughts on whether the quality of life has improved as a result of the credit facility intervention. Obasse, (2012).

Standard of living is the amount of goods and services actually consumed by an individual, household or community. This includes durable goods like cars, home appliances, consumer electronics, furniture, sports equipment and toys (Gudata, 2016) among others. It also includes non-durables like food items, cosmetics, fuel, beer, cigarettes, paper products, rubber, clothing and foot wear (Gudata, 2016). Also, expenditure in health, utilities and children education as well as ceremonies and social events are classified under level of living. A composite index was used to measure level of living that includes both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative measure for level of living is by summing up the total value, in Naira, of all materials actually consumed in the household including physical assets possessed. Akinmu, Clement & Samaila (2018) view standard of living as effort to increase farmers output and to create employment opportunities and to reduce the fundamental cases of poverty, diseases and ignorance.

According to Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), (2013) and United Nations (UN) (2014), everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and of his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The right to adequate housing. When a house lacks basic amenities, such as for cooking or storing food, the right to adequate food of its residents may be undermined. Also, when the cost of housing is too high, people may have to cut down on their food bill. The right to education, hunger and malnutrition impair children's learning abilities and may force them to drop out of school and work instead, thus undermining their enjoyment of the right to education. Moreover, to be free from hunger and malnutrition, individuals need to know how to maintain a nutritious diet and have the skills and capacity to produce or obtain food as a livelihood. Thus access to education, including vocational education, is essential for the enjoyment of the right to food.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was a longitudinal survey design. This method allows the researcher to look at changes over time. The population for this study was made up of all members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna State who benefitted from the credit facilities of Bank of Agriculture for the period of five years from 2013 to 2018. Bank of Agriculture Kaduna (175), Bank of Agriculture Ikara (185), Bank of Agriculture NDA (358), Bank of Agriculture Kafachan (197), and Bank of Agriculture Zaria (134), making a total of 1049. The entire population was used as sample for the study. Total Enumeration Sampling was thus adopted for this study. The decision to use the entire population of the study was purposive, because the population was not much. However, out of the 1049 sampled respondents 1044 were used, implying a mortality of five respondents and a data collection accuracy of over 98%. The study utilised an instrument designed by the researcher titled Women Co-operative Society Credit Facilities Questionnaire (WCSCFQ). The instrument had forty-five items which sought responses of respondents on the impact of credit facilities on their standard of living before and after benefiting from the credit facilities. Section A of the questionnaire (items 1-5) sought answers regarding the respondent's social data, (items 6-15) sought the economic details of the respondents, while section B sought answers on research questions one to five. (Items 16-23) answered research question one, (items 24-31) answered research question two, (items 31-37) answered research question three, (items 38-42) answered research question four while (items 43-45) answered research question five.

The researcher collected a letter of introduction from the Head, Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, which was used to introduce the researcher to the respondents. The researcher employed the services of two research assistants who were trained by the researcher on how to administer and collect the completed copies of the questionnaire. The researcher administered the instrument in Zaria and Kaduna metropolis, while the two trained research enumerators administered one in Kafachan and the other in Ikara. The researcher together with the two research enumerators ensured the successful administration of the instruments. The respondents were contacted through their secretaries using their mobile numbers beforehand and a convenient time was agreed upon. This was to avoid any inconvenience on both sides which was done in one week.

The meeting point with the respondents was the Bank of Agriculture branch offices where the respondents collected the credit facilities. The researcher had developed a good relationship with the corporate planning department of Bank of Agriculture and the chair persons and their secretaries who agreed with the venue which made the work easier and faster. Three weeks were used for the data collection. The first one week was for making the necessary arrangement for the successful administration of the instruments; the second week was used by the researcher to administer instruments. Three days at the Kaduna branch and two days at the NDA branch. Similarly the two trained enumerators administered one in Kafachan and the other Ikara that same week respectively. The researcher administered to respondents in Zaria the third week. The exercise was tedious as the researcher and the research assistants had to explain where necessary. The data collected were

analyzed using frequency and percentage to describe the socio-economic and institutional characteristics of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. To answer the research questions, the means of items were obtained through a scale of 5 levels showing the perceived impact levels from 1-5 for very little (1), little (2), some (3), high (4), and very high (5). A composite of all related variables and items was put together and measured using a common index.

To test the null, a paired sample t-test was used. This was considered suitable for this research because it was used to compare a single population before and after credit facility. All the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. In the test of the null hypotheses, any null hypothesis that had a calculated p-value greater than the alpha p-value was retained.

Data Presentation

The two research questions were answered as follows

Research Question 1: What is the impact of Credit Facilities on quality of feeding among Members of Women Co-operative Societies in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Impact of credit facilities on quality of feeding among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria

*Items	Means (M) N= 1,044		Differences (Mean)	Remarks (Impact)
	Before	After		
Affordability of nutritionally balanced diet	3.22 (2.73)	4.12 (1.23)	0.90	Positive
Ability to feed adequate quantity	3.28 (1.69)	4.53 (2.01)	1.25	Positive
Ability to feed regularly	3.44 (2.85)	4.11 (1.97)	0.57	Positive

Source: field work, 2023

Table 1, indicates that credit facilities had enabled the respondents afford nutritionally balanced diet (M=4.12, SD =1.23); adequate quantity of food (M=4.53, SD = 2.01} and regularly as required (M = 4.11, SD = 1.97).Also, the respondents reported that their feeding before obtaining the credit facilities was 3.22 (SD = 2.73), 3.28 (SD = 1.69) and 3.44 (SD = 2.85) for affordability of balanced diet, adequacy and regularity in feeding respectively. The mean differences for all the items indicate positive direction which could mean positive impact. Hence, responses imply that there is positive impact of the credit facilities as all the mean scores for the “after” credit intervention were greater than the “before” credit scores. Therefore, the research question is responded with concurrence among all the respondents of having good nutrition of balanced diet consumed in adequate quantity at regular interval required.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of credit facilities on quality of healthcare among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria?

Table 2: Impact of credit facilities on quality of healthcare among members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

*Items	Means (M) N= 1,044		Differences (Mean)	Remarks (Impact)
	Before	After		
Improved body health	2.32 (2.05)	3.89 (2.37)	1.57	Positive
Reduced sickness	2.67 (1.57)	3.53 (2.08)	0.86	Positive
Increased well-being	3.41 (3.11)	3.74 (2.18)	0.33	Positive

Source: field work, 2023

Table 2, showed improved health ($M = 2.32$; $SD = 2.05$), increased wellbeing ($M = 2.67$; $SD = 1.57$) and reduced sickness ($M = 3.41$; $SD = 3.11$) before the intervention. On the other hand, the responses showed an improved body health ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 2.37$), increased well-being ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 2.18$) and reduced sickness ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 2.08$) were found after the intervention of credit facilities to women co-operatives. This shows a positive mean differences of 1.57, 1.07 and 0.12 respectively as the respondents' responses to the research question for impact of credit facilities on the healthcare among the members of women co-operative societies.

Test of Hypotheses

Results of test of the two null hypotheses were presented in Tables 3 to 4.

Hypothesis One: Credit facilities do not have significant impact on the quality of feeding of members of women cooperative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria.

To test this null hypothesis, impact of credit facilities on feeding of members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria before and after were compared using the paired sample t-test analysis as studied in table 3.

Table 3: t-test analysis on impact of Credit facilities on quality of feeding of members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	STD	Mean Difference	Df	t computed	P
Quality of feeding Before	1044	86179.40	67243.32				
Quality of feeding After	1044	189295.55	124309.55	103116.15	1043	48.446	0.000

Source: field work, 2023 **P < 0.05, T computed > 1.96 at df 1043**

The outcome of the Paired sample t test comparison test showed that Credit facilities have a significant impact on the quality of feeding of members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Reasons being that the computed p value of 0.000 is below the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The mean value of quality of feeding before and after credit facilities were 86179.40 and 189295.55 respectively. This shows that there is an increase of 103116.15 as a result of the credit facilities showing the positive impact of the credit facilities. Therefore the null hypothesis which state that Credit facilities does not have significant impact on the quality of feeding of members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria, is thereby rejected.

Hypothesis Two: Credit facilities do not have significant impact on quality of healthcare of members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria.

To test this null hypothesis, impact of Credit facilities on the type of healthcare of members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria before and after benefiting the credit facilities were compared using the paired sample t-test analysis as studied in table 4.

Table 4: t-test analysis on impact of Credit facilities on the quality of healthcare of members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	STD	Mean Difference	Df	t computed	P
Quality of Healthcare Before	1020	87175.28	80722.53				
Quality of Healthcare After	1020	192526.11	197948.81	105350.82	1019	18.82	0..002

Source: field work, 2023 **P < 0.05, T computed > 1.96 at df 1043**

The outcome of the Paired sample t-test showed that Credit facilities had a significant impact on the quality of Healthcare for members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Reasons

being that the computed p-value of 0.002 is below the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The mean value of Healthcare quality before and after credit facilities were 87175.28 and 192526.11 respectively. This indicating an increase of 105350.82 showing the positive impact of the credit facilities on Healthcare of members. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that Credit facilities do not have a significant impact on the quality of Healthcare for members of women co-operative societies in Kaduna state, Nigeria, is thereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

From the above analysis, the following findings were derived:

The data analysis used to answer research question one and test of null hypothesis one revealed that Credit facilities improved the standard of living of the women ($t=48.446$, $p=0.000$) because quality of feeding of members of women co-operative societies was better after benefiting the credit facilities which is in line with Adebayo, Chinedum, Dado and Pascal (2010) who focused on the Impact of co-operatives on rural development and poverty reduction in Rwanda through observation and oral interview revealed that 23% used loan and improved their family feeding. Likewise, Tsehay and Mengistu (2012) started that over 94% of women that obtained credit facilities have improved their diet or the quality of food they consume. Noll (2014) started that income has a great effect on standard of living and as such influence positively the consumption pattern of the family. While Ekesionye and Okoli (2022) also reported that credit facilities given to women co-operative societies helps improv their feeding and their living condition.

The findings of research question two revealed that Credit facilities improved the standard of living of the women ($t=18.82$, $p=0.002$) because the quality of healthcare of members of women co-operative societies was better after benefiting credit facilities which is online with Ekesionye and Okoli (2022) and WHO (2018) who started that, empowering women promote family health and well-being because women contribute to their family development.

Conclusion

The findings of this research provide useful insights for the government agencies regarding the formula tion of policies and taking the appropriate measures toward designing strategies to improve access to credit facilities and the overall performance of participants in the cooperative industries. Therefore, credit facilities should be provided to members of co-operative societies especially women, by government and other financial institutions and the interest rate should be reduced if not illuminated, because credit facilities impacts standard of living significantly.

Recommendations

Deducing from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were drawn:

- i. The Federal Government of Nigeria should put in more efforts to providing credit facilities especially to the women and constantly review to ensure that the purpose of the credit facilities is achieved.
- ii. The sustenance of the credit facilities be intensified and supported by other financial houses as this have greatly improved the standard of living of the women who took the credit.

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