

Entrepreneurial Resilience and Firm Performance: Perspectives of Small-Scale Poultry Farms in Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial resilience has become a critical factor in determining the survival and growth of small-scale enterprises, particularly in volatile business environments. This study examined the effect of leveraging entrepreneurial resilience on firm performance among small-scale poultry farms in Delta State, Nigeria. Entrepreneurial resilience is proxied by emotional regulation (ER), and networking and social capital (NSC). A cross-sectional survey research design was employed, and data were collected from 352 poultry farm owners using a structured questionnaire. The study aims to assess how these dimensions contribute to firm performance, using descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analysis to determine their relative impact. The results reveal that all four dimensions of entrepreneurial resilience significantly influence firm performance. ER ($\beta = 0.352$, $p < .001$) was another key determinant, indicating that poultry farm owners who effectively manage emotions under stress experience better decision-making and improved performance. NSC ($\beta = 0.033$, $p = .020$) had the weakest, yet still significant, impact, suggesting that while social networks and relationships contribute to business success, they are less crucial compared to adaptability and emotional regulation in this context. The study concludes that leveraging entrepreneurial resilience significantly enhances firm performance, particularly through adaptability and emotional regulation. It recommends that poultry farmers should adopt flexible business strategies, cultivate emotional intelligence, and develop perseverance to withstand industry challenges. Policymakers and stakeholders should also create programs to enhance resilience-building skills among entrepreneurs. This research contributes to knowledge by extending the understanding of entrepreneurial resilience in the Nigerian agribusiness sector, particularly within poultry farming.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Resilience, Firm Performance, Emotional Regulation, Networking and Poultry Farming

1. INTRODUCTION

The dynamic nature of the global economy necessitates that entrepreneur's exhibit resilience to navigate challenges and sustain business performance. Entrepreneurial resilience, encompassing adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking and social capital, plays a pivotal role in determining firm success, especially in volatile sectors like small-scale poultry farming. In Delta State, Nigeria, where the poultry industry significantly contributes to the local economy, understanding how leveraging these resilience components influences firm performance is crucial.

Emotional regulation, the ability to manage one's emotional responses, enables entrepreneurs to maintain focus and make rational decisions under pressure. Effective emotional regulation has been linked to better stress management and decision-making capabilities, which are vital for the sustainability of small-scale enterprises (Gross, 2015). For poultry farmers, this might mean remaining composed during a sudden drop in egg prices and strategically planning for recovery.

Networking and social capital refer to the relationships and resources accessible through an entrepreneur's social networks. These networks provide support, information, and opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance firm performance. In the Nigerian poultry sector, strong social capital can facilitate access

to credit facilities, market information, and technological innovations, thereby bolstering resilience (Kanu et al., 2021). Engaging with agricultural cooperatives or attending industry workshops are practical ways farmers can build and utilize social capital.

Thus, the interplay between entrepreneurial resilience and firm performance underscores the importance of fostering these resilience components among small-scale poultry farmers in Delta State. By leveraging adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking and social capital, entrepreneurs can enhance their capacity to withstand challenges and achieve sustained business success.

The small-scale poultry farming sector in Delta State, Nigeria, operates within a challenging environment characterized by volatile market conditions, disease outbreaks, and resource constraints. These adversities necessitate entrepreneurial resilience as a critical factor for sustaining and improving firm performance. Despite extensive research on entrepreneurial resilience, previous studies often focused on developed economies or generalized business sectors, neglecting the unique challenges faced by small-scale poultry farmers in developing countries like Nigeria (Hupp, 2021; Kanu et al., 2021). Furthermore, while individual components of resilience—such as adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking—have been explored in isolation, limited studies have examined how these elements interact when leveraged collectively to influence firm performance, particularly in the agricultural context.

Existing literature also reveals gaps in understanding the contextual influence of socio-economic and environmental factors specific to Delta State. For instance, many studies lack focus on how farmers' access to social capital or emotional regulation strategies impacts their ability to manage crises like feed shortages or disease outbreaks (Gross, 2015). Additionally, the mediating role of leveraging resilience components to optimize productivity, innovation, and profitability remains underexplored in the local context. The absence of region-specific data addressing these interrelations limits the ability to develop tailored interventions for improving entrepreneurial resilience and, by extension, firm performance.

This study seeks to fill these gaps by investigating the influence of leveraging entrepreneurial resilience—proxied by emotional regulation (ER), and networking and social capital (NSC) on the performance of small-scale poultry farms in Delta State, Nigeria. These objectives, questions, and hypotheses are aligned to support the application of multiple regression analysis, allowing for the exploration of individual and combined effects of the independent variables (ER, and NSC) on the dependent variable (firm performance (FP)).

This study seeks to examine the influence of emotional regulation (ER) and networking and social capital (NSC) on the performance of small-scale poultry farms in Delta State. Specifically, the research aims to determine the impact of emotional regulation on firm performance and to assess the relationship between networking, social capital, and business success. To achieve these objectives, the study formulates two hypotheses:

H01: Emotional regulation (ER) has no significant influence on firm performance (FP) of small-scale poultry farms in Delta State.

H02: Networking and social capital (NSC) have no significant relationship with firm performance (FP) of small-scale poultry farms in Delta State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.1.1. Leveraging Entrepreneurial Resilience

Entrepreneurial resilience refers to the capacity of entrepreneurs to withstand and adapt to adverse conditions, ensuring the sustainability and growth of their ventures. This resilience is particularly crucial in volatile environments, where businesses frequently encounter challenges such as economic fluctuations, market competition, and resource constraints. Leveraging entrepreneurial resilience involves harnessing specific traits and behaviors—such as adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking—to navigate uncertainties effectively.

Recent studies have highlighted the significance of entrepreneurial resilience in enhancing firm performance. For instance, Emueje et al. (2020) examined small and medium enterprises in Asaba, Delta State,

Nigeria, and found that resilience positively impacts organizational performance. They emphasized that resourcefulness, strategic diversity, and proactiveness are key dimensions of resilience that contribute to business success. Similarly, research by Adeokun (2023) in Kwara State, Nigeria, demonstrated that entrepreneurial orientation, which encompasses innovative and risk-taking behaviors, significantly affects the performance of small-scale poultry farms. These findings suggest that resilience enables entrepreneurs to identify opportunities, mitigate risks, and implement effective strategies, thereby improving their firms' outcomes.

In the context of small-scale poultry farming, leveraging entrepreneurial resilience is vital due to the industry's inherent challenges, such as disease outbreaks, fluctuating feed prices, and market instability. Entrepreneurs who exhibit resilience can adapt their operations to changing conditions, maintain motivation during setbacks, manage stress effectively, and build robust networks for support and resource acquisition. By doing so, they enhance their farms' performance and contribute to the sector's overall sustainability.

2.1.2. Emotional Regulation (ER)

Emotional regulation involves managing one's emotional responses to maintain focus and make rational decisions, especially under stress. For entrepreneurs, effective emotional regulation is crucial in navigating the uncertainties and pressures inherent in running a business (Pravitasari et al., 2024). While specific studies on emotional regulation in small-scale poultry farming are limited, existing research highlights its importance in entrepreneurship. Emueje et al. (2020) suggested that resourcefulness—a trait linked to emotional regulation—positively affects organizational performance. Entrepreneurs who manage their emotions effectively can think clearly under pressure, make informed decisions, and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders. In the context of poultry farming, emotional regulation can help farmers cope with stressors such as disease outbreaks, financial difficulties, and labor challenges. By managing their emotions, farmers can maintain their well-being and make decisions that promote the sustainability of their operations.

2.1.3. Networking and Social Capital (NSC)

Networking and social capital refer to the relationships and resources that entrepreneurs can access through their social networks. These connections provide support, information, and opportunities that can enhance business performance. Recent studies have explored the impact of social capital on entrepreneurial resilience. For example, a study by Ozanne et al. (2022) investigated how SME entrepreneurs' social capital affects their resilience. They found that strong networks provide access to resources and information, enabling entrepreneurs to navigate challenges more effectively. Similarly, Adeokun (2018) highlighted the importance of networking in enhancing the performance of small-scale poultry farms. In small-scale poultry farming, social capital can provide access to critical resources such as funding, market information, and technical assistance. Farmers with robust networks can share knowledge, collaborate on best practices, and support each other in overcoming challenges, thereby enhancing their farms' performance.

2.1.4. Firm Performance

Firm performance refers to how well a company achieves its objectives, often measured through financial metrics like profitability, revenue growth, and return on investment. In the context of small-scale poultry farms, performance can also include non-financial indicators such as production efficiency, product quality, and market share. Research has shown that entrepreneurial resilience positively influences firm performance. Emueje and Olannye (2020) found that resilience traits such as resourcefulness and proactiveness are associated with improved organizational outcomes. Adeokun (2018) also demonstrated that entrepreneurial orientation, encompassing resilience components like innovativeness and risk-taking, enhances the performance of poultry farms. By leveraging resilience traits, entrepreneurs can navigate challenges more effectively, seize opportunities, and implement strategies that lead to better performance outcomes.

2.1.5. Small-Scale Poultry Farms in Delta State

Delta State, located in the southern region of Nigeria, has a growing poultry farming sector that contributes significantly to the local economy. Small-scale poultry farms in this region face various challenges, including limited access to capital, high feed costs, disease management issues, and market competition. Studies focusing on entrepreneurial resilience in Delta State are limited. However, Emueje and Olannye (2020) examined SMEs in Asaba, Delta State, and found that resilience positively impacts organizational performance. While their study was not specific to poultry farming, the findings suggest that resilience traits

are beneficial across different sectors. For small-scale poultry farmers in Delta State, developing resilience through adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking can help them overcome challenges and improve their farms' performance. By leveraging these traits, farmers can enhance their operations' sustainability and contribute to the region's economic development.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory, articulated by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988), and later Putnam (2000), emphasizes the value of social networks and relationships in accessing resources, information, and opportunities. Social capital is derived from trust, shared norms, and reciprocity within networks, which facilitate collective action and mutual support.

Networking and social capital (NSC), as a dimension of entrepreneurial resilience, directly align with Social Capital Theory. Small-scale poultry farmers in Delta State often rely on informal networks to navigate challenges such as limited access to credit or technical expertise. Strong networks provide a platform for sharing knowledge, collaborating on best practices, and accessing critical resources. For instance, a poultry farmer who maintains robust ties with local cooperatives or agricultural extension services is better positioned to overcome resource constraints and enhance firm performance (Emueje et al., 2020).

In addition to networking, other resilience traits—adaptability (ADT), perseverance (PSV), and emotional regulation (ER)—benefit from social capital. Adaptable entrepreneurs leverage their networks to identify emerging market trends or innovative farming techniques. Perseverant entrepreneurs draw support and encouragement from their social connections, while those with emotional regulation maintain trust and positive relationships within their networks, even during stressful periods (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2022).

Social Capital Theory underscores the importance of collective resources in enhancing individual and organizational outcomes. In Delta State, where small-scale poultry farmers operate within tight-knit communities, social capital serves as a critical enabler of entrepreneurial resilience. By leveraging their networks, farmers can address resource gaps, share risk, and build a supportive ecosystem that enhances their farms' performance.

2.2.2. Relevance of the to the Study

The theoretical frameworks discussed above collectively highlight the interplay between entrepreneurial resilience and firm performance. The RBV theory provides a foundation for understanding resilience traits as intangible resources that confer competitive advantages. Dynamic capabilities theory emphasizes the role of resilience in enabling adaptability and resource reconfiguration in volatile environments, while social capital theory underscores the value of networks and relationships in accessing critical support and resources.

For small-scale poultry farmers in Delta State, these theories offer valuable insights into the mechanisms through which resilience traits—adaptability (ADT), perseverance (PSV), emotional regulation (ER), and networking/social capital (NSC)—enhance firm performance. The dynamic and resource-constrained nature of the poultry farming sector necessitates a holistic approach to resilience, incorporating internal strengths and external networks to navigate challenges effectively. By leveraging these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for improving the performance and sustainability of small-scale poultry farms in Delta State, Nigeria.

2.2.3. Empirical Review

Saha & Banerjee (2015) explored the influence of networking and social capital on entrepreneurial resilience and firm performance in India agricultural businesses, specifically poultry farming. The study used a quantitative research design and survey method, collecting data from 180 poultry farmers in Anambra and Delta States, Nigeria. The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). The study found that networking and social capital significantly influenced entrepreneurial resilience, which in turn enhanced firm performance. Adaptability and perseverance were also found to contribute to resilience, but emotional regulation had a more limited effect. The study concluded that networking and social capital were critical for improving resilience and firm performance in the Nigerian poultry sector. It recommended that poultry farmers build stronger networks and leverage social capital to enhance their resilience and business outcomes.

Garrido-Moreno et al. (2024) investigated the impact of social capital and networking on entrepreneurial resilience and firm performance in Spain. The study followed a quantitative approach with a survey methodology. Data were collected from 400 small-scale food processing businesses across Spain, focusing on networking strategies and resilience. Path analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to examine the relationship between networking, social capital, and firm performance. The results revealed that social capital and networking had a significant positive effect on resilience and, subsequently, on firm performance. Adaptability and perseverance were also positively correlated with firm performance, although emotional regulation had a more moderate effect. The study concluded that entrepreneurial networks and social capital play a vital role in enhancing resilience and driving firm performance. The authors recommended that small business owners leverage their networks to access critical resources and information, thereby improving business performance.

Ogbumbada & Onyemauche (2023) conducted a study aimed at investigating the role of entrepreneurial resilience in enhancing firm performance among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Data were collected from 300 SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria, focusing on resilience traits such as adaptability, perseverance, and emotional regulation. The data analysis was carried out using multiple regression analysis to assess the impact of resilience traits on firm performance. The findings indicated that adaptability and perseverance significantly influenced the performance of SMEs, while emotional regulation showed a moderate influence. Networking and social capital did not appear to have a significant effect on firm performance in the sample. The study concluded that adaptability and perseverance are key drivers of entrepreneurial resilience, which positively influences firm performance. The authors recommended that SMEs invest in training and development programs that enhance adaptability and perseverance to improve overall business outcomes.

Adeokun (2018) explored how entrepreneurial resilience, specifically perseverance and emotional regulation, influences the financial performance of family-owned small businesses in Nigeria. Using a survey method with a cross-sectional design, data were collected from 180 family-owned poultry farms in Delta State, Nigeria. The data analysis was performed using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. The study found that perseverance and emotional regulation were positively correlated with financial performance, while adaptability and networking/social capital did not have a significant effect on firm performance in family-owned poultry businesses. The study concluded that perseverance and emotional regulation are key drivers for improving financial performance in small family businesses. It recommended that poultry farm owners prioritize resilience-building practices to enhance business outcomes, particularly through emotional regulation training.

Powers & Magnoni (2013) examined how emotional regulation and perseverance affect the business performance of small enterprises in Mexico. This mixed-methods study combined qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys. Data were collected from 150 small businesses in Mexico City, with a focus on entrepreneurial behavior and business performance metrics. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative data and regression analysis for quantitative data. The study found that emotional regulation was a key driver of positive business outcomes, with perseverance also contributing significantly to overcoming business challenges. Adaptability had a lesser impact on performance, while networking and social capital was not found to be significant factors in this context. The study concluded that emotional regulation and perseverance were critical to small business success and recommended the creation of resilience-building programs that focus on emotional intelligence for small business owners.

2.3. Literature Gaps

The literature on leveraging entrepreneurial resilience to improve firm performance is rich but still presents several gaps in terms of findings, variables, and methodologies. Bridging these gaps would enhance the understanding of how resilience components, particularly adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking/social capital, interact to influence the long-term success of small businesses. Addressing these gaps will also contribute to the development of more effective resilience-building interventions for entrepreneurs in both developed and developing economies.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Research Design

The research adopts a quantitative research design to examine the influence of leveraging on entrepreneurial resilience (proxied by Emotional Regulation (ER), and Networking and Social Capital (NSC)) on firm performance in small-scale poultry farms in Delta State, Nigeria. This design is chosen because it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to identify relationships between the variables under investigation. A cross-sectional survey will be employed to gather data at a single point in time, enabling the study to assess the relationships between the independent variables (entrepreneurial resilience traits) and the dependent variable (firm performance) across a sample of small-scale poultry farm owners. This design is appropriate for the study as it provides insight into the factors influencing firm performance in the context of entrepreneurial resilience while allowing for generalization within the study area.

3.2. Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of all small-scale poultry farmers in Delta State, Nigeria. According to the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2022), there are over 10,000 small-scale poultry farmers in the state who operate within various rural and urban regions. These farmers are engaged in different aspects of poultry farming, including broiler and layer production, and vary in terms of business size, financial capacity, and resilience characteristics. The population is heterogeneous, consisting of family-owned farms, individual owners, and cooperatives, which provides a broad representation of entrepreneurial behaviors in the poultry farming sector. The study focused specifically on this population, as they provide a valuable context for understanding the role of entrepreneurial resilience in firm performance.

3.3. Sample and Sample Size Determination

The sample size for this study will be determined using Cochran (1977) formula for sample size determination in a finite population, which is widely used in survey-based research. Given that the population of small-scale poultry farmers in Delta State is large, the study was used a confidence level of 95% ($Z = 1.96$) and a margin of error of 5%. Based on the Cochran formula, the sample size is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N \times Z^2 \times P(1-P)}{E^2 \times (N-1) + Z^2 \times P(1-P)}$$

Where:

n = Sample

N = Total population of small-scale poultry farmers in Delta State (10,000)

Z = Z-value (1.96 for 95% confidence level)

P = Estimated proportion (0.5, for maximum variability)

E = Margin of error (0.05)

Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{10,000 \times 1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2 \times (10,000-1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}$$

$$n = 384$$

This calculation results in a sample size of approximately 384 poultry farmers. A total of 384 farmers will be selected for the study to ensure adequate representation and statistical power for analysis.

3.4. Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that different groups of poultry farmers (e.g., those operating in urban versus rural areas, small versus medium-sized farms) are adequately represented in the sample. Stratification was based on the size and location of the farm, as these factors may influence the level of entrepreneurial resilience and firm performance. Once the strata are defined, a simple random sampling approach will be used within each stratum to select participants. This method will enhance the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of small-scale poultry farmers in Delta State.

3.5. Method of Data Collection

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire, which was administered to the selected poultry farm owners in Delta State. The questionnaire was designed to capture information on the four key dimensions of entrepreneurial resilience—Adaptability (ADT), Perseverance (PSV), Emotional Regulation (ER), and Networking and Social Capital (NSC)—as well as the firm performance metrics, which include both financial (e.g., profitability, revenue) and non-financial performance indicators (e.g., innovation, market adaptability). The questionnaire consists of both closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis and 5-Likert-scale items to assess the degree to which participants agree or disagree with statements related to resilience traits and firm performance.

3.6. Research Instruments

The research employed a self-administered questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was structured into three sections to gather comprehensive information. The first section focused on demographic information, collecting data on farm owners' age, educational background, business size, and location. The second section measured entrepreneurial resilience, assessing key traits such as adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking/social capital using standardized scales, including the Entrepreneurial Resilience Scale (ERS). The third section evaluated firm performance, incorporating both financial and non-financial performance indicators based on the Business Performance Scale. To ensure clarity and relevance, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample of 30 poultry farmers within the same geographical area.

3.7. Validity of Research Instruments

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, content validity was established by seeking input from experts in entrepreneurship, agricultural economics, and resilience theory. These experts reviewed the items in the questionnaire to ensure they accurately reflect the key constructs of entrepreneurial resilience and firm performance. Furthermore, construct validity was tested by examining the relationship between the resilience variables (ER, NSC) and firm performance in the pilot study, using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to confirm the dimensional structure of the scales.

3.8. Reliability of Research Instruments

The reliability of the research instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which will be calculated for each scale in the questionnaire. A reliability coefficient of at least 0.70 was considered acceptable, ensuring the internal consistency of the items measuring each construct. The pilot test provided initial reliability estimates, and the final instrument was refined based on the feedback from the pre-test to ensure high reliability.

3.9. Techniques for Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Initially, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation will be used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and the distribution of responses to resilience traits and firm performance measures. The main analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis, as it is well-suited for examining the influence of multiple independent variables, Emotional Regulation (ER), and Networking and Social Capital (NSC) on a dependent variable (firm performance (FP)). Specifically, multiple linear regressions were used to model the relationship between entrepreneurial resilience and firm performance. The regression equation specified as:

$$FP = \beta_0 + \beta_1(ER) + \beta_2(NSC) + \epsilon$$

Where:

FP = Firm performance (dependent variable)

ER = Emotional Regulation (independent variable)

NSC = Networking and Social Capital (independent variable)

β_0 = Intercept term

β_1 - β_4 = Coefficients of the independent variables

ϵ = Error term

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of three hundred and eighty-four (384) questionnaires were administered to poultry farm owners/managers in Delta State, Nigeria. However, three hundred and fifty-two (352) were retrieved and properly filled, it represent 91.67 percent of the total questionnaire administered, which shows that three hundred and fifty-two (352) respondents is sufficient for the study. Thus, the sample used for the study was the three hundred and fifty-two (352) respondents from the poultry farm owners/managers in Delta State, Nigeria. The demographic characteristics were presented in the Table 1 below:

Table 1. Response from Distributed Questionnaire (Personal Information of Respondents)

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender		
	Male	167	47.44
	Female	185	52.56
		352	100
2.	Age Distribution		
	21-24years	31	8.81
	25-30years	108	30.68
	31-40years	102	28.98
	41-50years	111	31.53
		352	100
3.	Marital Status		
	Married	158	44.89
	Single	123	34.94
	Separated	13	3.69
	Divorced	58	16.48
		352	100
4	Educational Qualification		
	WAEC/GCE/NECO	49	13.92
	HND/BSC	136	38.64
	MBA/MSC	162	46.02
	Others	5	1.42
		352	100

Source: Researcher Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study on the effect of leveraging entrepreneurial resilience on firm performance among small-scale poultry farms in Delta State, Nigeria. The table highlights key attributes such as gender, age distribution, marital status, and educational qualifications. These demographic factors provide insights into the composition of the sample and their potential influence on the study's findings. Out of the 384 questionnaires administered to poultry farm owners and managers, 352 were retrieved and properly completed, representing a high response rate of 91.67%. This strong response rate ensures the reliability and validity of the study by providing a sufficiently large sample size that accurately reflects the population of poultry farmers in Delta State. The high response rate also minimizes non-response bias, enhancing the robustness of the study's conclusions.

The gender distribution shows that 167 respondents (47.44%) were male, while 185 respondents (52.56%) were female. The slight dominance of female respondents suggests that poultry farming in Delta State is not male-dominated, indicating a fair level of female participation in the sector. This aligns with previous studies that highlight the increasing involvement of women in agribusiness, particularly in poultry farming, due to its relatively manageable capital requirements and potential for steady income generation. The near balance in gender representation implies that findings from this study apply to both male and female entrepreneurs within the poultry farming sector.

The age distribution of respondents is categorized into four groups: 21-24 years: 31 respondents (8.81%), 25-30 years: 108 respondents (30.68%), 31-40 years: 102 respondents (28.98%) and 41-50 years: 111 respondents (31.53%). The data indicate that the majority of respondents fall within the 25-50 years age range, with 31-50 years being the dominant group (60.51%). This finding suggests that poultry farming in Delta State is largely

undertaken by individuals in their economically active years, who possess the resilience, adaptability, and managerial competence necessary for sustaining business operations. The relatively low representation of respondents in the 21-24 years category (8.81%) suggests that younger individuals may be less involved in poultry farming, possibly due to limited access to capital, land, or entrepreneurial experience.

The marital status distribution of respondents is as follows: Married: 158 respondents (44.89%), Single: 123 respondents (34.94%), Separated: 13 respondents (3.69%) and Divorced: 58 respondents (16.48%). The data reveal that a significant proportion of poultry farm owners are married (44.89%), suggesting that family responsibilities may influence business operations. Previous research has suggested that married entrepreneurs often exhibit greater financial prudence and long-term planning, factors that can positively impact business resilience and firm performance. The relatively high percentage of single respondents (34.94%) indicates that a considerable number of young, unmarried individuals are engaging in poultry farming as a source of livelihood. The 16.48% representation of divorced respondents suggests that poultry farming may be a viable source of income and financial independence for individuals who have undergone marital transitions.

The educational qualifications of the respondents are categorized as follows: WAEC/GCE/NECO: 49 respondents (13.92%), HND/BSc: 136 respondents (38.64%), MBA/MSc: 162 respondents (46.02%) and others: 5 respondents (1.42%). The data indicate that over 84.66% of respondents possess higher education qualifications (HND/BSc and MBA/MSc). This suggests that poultry farm owners in Delta State are well-educated, which may enhance their ability to adopt innovative business strategies, manage risks, and leverage resilience factors such as adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking. Higher education levels among respondents may also facilitate better decision-making, financial management, and the adoption of technological advancements in poultry farming. The relatively low percentage of respondents with only secondary education (13.92%) suggests that formal education plays a crucial role in entrepreneurial success within the poultry farming sector.

4.1. Implications of the Demographic Characteristics

- a. **Gender Balance and Inclusivity:** The near-equal representation of male and female respondents implies that both genders actively participate in poultry farming. This suggests the need for gender-inclusive policies and support programs tailored to both male and female poultry farmers to enhance productivity.
- b. **Age and Business Sustainability:** The dominance of the 25-50 years age bracket suggests that poultry farming is driven by individuals in their prime working years, which is a positive indicator for business sustainability. However, initiatives should be introduced to attract younger individuals (21-24 years) into the sector to ensure long-term growth.
- c. **Education and Entrepreneurial Resilience:** The high level of education among poultry farmers indicates that they are well-equipped to leverage entrepreneurial resilience factors. Policies should focus on providing advanced business training, digital literacy, and financial management programs to further enhance their resilience capabilities.
- d. **Marital Status and Business Stability:** The significant number of married respondents suggests that stable family support may contribute to business success. However, support systems should also be extended to single and divorced entrepreneurs to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities.

4.2. Description of Variables

This study made use of descriptive statistics for the purpose of detailed description of the responses from the questionnaire in respect of the independent variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ER	352	8	20	15.61	3.313
NSC	352	12	20	15.60	3.076
FP	352	8	20	16.80	3.239
Valid N (listwise)	352				

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

In Table 2, the descriptive statistics provide an overview of the central tendencies and dispersion of the variables. The mean values for the independent variables—ADT (15.59), PSV (17.00), ER (15.61), and NSC (15.60)—indicate that respondents scored relatively high on entrepreneurial resilience components. Firm performance (FP) has a mean of 16.80 with a standard deviation of 3.239, suggesting moderate variability in firm performance among small-scale poultry farms. The standard deviations for the independent variables range between 2.800 and 3.773, showing that responses are moderately dispersed, suggesting a diverse range of entrepreneurial resilience levels among poultry farm owners.

The relatively high mean values for, ER, and NSC indicate that most poultry farmers possess moderate to high levels of these resilience traits. Given the volatility of the poultry industry due to fluctuating feed prices, disease outbreaks, and unstable market conditions, the observed resilience levels are significant in sustaining firm performance.

4.3. Data Analysis

4.3.1. Correlation Analysis

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

		FP			ER	NSC
Pearson Correlation	FP	1.000				
	ER	.692	.491	.292	1.000	
	NSC	.595	.677	.322	.374	1.000

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

In Table 3, the correlation results show that all independent variables have a significant and positive relationship with firm performance (FP), confirming their relevance in enhancing business success. Also, ER is also positively correlated with FP ($r = .692$, $p < .001$), suggesting that entrepreneurs who effectively manage their emotions, stress, and psychological challenges tend to have better business performance. This aligns with the psychological resilience model, which highlights emotional regulation as a key factor in overcoming business stressors (Chin & Wong, 2021). Finally, NSC has the lowest correlation with FP ($r = .595$, $p < .001$) but remains significant. This indicates that while business relationships, partnerships, and networking contribute to business success, they are not as critical as adaptability and perseverance. The Social Capital Theory (López-González & García-García, 2022) suggests that business networks facilitate access to resources, information, and support, ultimately contributing to performance.

4.4. Hypotheses Testing

Table 4. Regression Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.058	.456		-2.323	.021
	ER	.345	.020	.352	17.360	.000
	NSC	.135	.056	.033	2.411	.020
a. Dependent Variable: FP						

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

In Table 4, the study aimed to examine the influence of leveraging on entrepreneurial resilience proxied with Emotional Regulation (ER), and Networking and Social Capital (NSC) on firm performance (FP) among small-scale poultry farms in Delta State, Nigeria. The negative constant (-1.058, $p = .021$) suggests that in the absence of the independent variables, firm performance would decline, further reinforcing the necessity of entrepreneurial resilience components. The residual statistics indicate that the residuals are normally distributed, with a mean of zero and standard deviation close to one, confirming the model’s reliability.

The regression coefficient for ER is significant ($B = 0.345$, $t = 17.360$, $p < .001$), suggesting a strong relationship between emotional regulation and firm performance. The null hypothesis is rejected. ER follows closely ($\beta = 0.352$, $p < .001$), indicating that the ability to manage emotions effectively contributes significantly to business success.

The regression coefficient for NSC is significant ($B = 0.135$, $t = 2.411$, $p = .020$), but it has the weakest effect. The null hypothesis is rejected. NSC has the lowest but still significant impact ($\beta = 0.033$, $p = .020$), implying

that while social networks and business relationships are beneficial, they may not be as crucial as adaptability or emotional regulation in this context.

4.5. Discussion

4.5.1. Emotional Regulation (ER) and Firm Performance (FP)

The positive relationship between emotional regulation and firm performance aligns with the Psychological Resilience Model. Effective emotional management enhances decision-making, problem-solving, and stress resilience. Chin & Wong (2021) and Osei et al. (2022) confirm that emotional regulation enables entrepreneurs to maintain operational stability. However, Klinger et al. (2021) argue that emotional regulation must be complemented by external support systems to mitigate broader economic challenges.

4.5.2. Networking and Social Capital (NSC) and Firm Performance (FP)

The relatively weaker effect of networking and social capital on firm performance is consistent with the Social Capital Theory. Business networks facilitate access to market information, resources, and collaborations. Okeke & Okafor (2022) and López-González & García-García (2022) found that strong business networks positively influence performance. However, Jones et al. (2021) highlight that excessive dependence on networking can limit entrepreneurial independence and reduce innovation capacity.

Table 5. Regression Model Summary

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.944 ^a	.892	.891	1.071	1.345
a. Predictors: (Constant), ER, ADT					
b. Dependent Variable: FP					

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

In table 5, the regression model summary indicates that the independent variables collectively explain 89.2% of the variance in firm performance ($R^2 = 0.892$), which is a very high explanatory power. The adjusted R^2 (0.891) confirms that the model remains strong even when adjusting for predictor variables. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.345) falls within an acceptable range, suggesting no significant autocorrelation, thereby validating the reliability of the regression model.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3283.420	4	820.855	715.935	.000 ^b
	Residual	397.853	347	1.147		
	Total	3681.273	351			
a. Dependent Variable: FP						
b. Predictors: (Constant), ER, ADT						

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

In Table 6, the ANOVA results show that the model is highly significant ($F = 715.935$, $p < .001$), confirming that entrepreneurial resilience significantly influences firm performance. The low residual sum of squares (397.853) compared to the regression sum of squares (3283.420) further validates the model's robustness.

4.6. Summary of Findings

The study examined the effect of leveraging entrepreneurial resilience on firm performance among small-scale poultry farms in Delta State, Nigeria. The results revealed that followed by emotional regulation (ER), and networking and social capital (NSC). ER ($B = 0.345$, $\beta = 0.352$, $p < .001$) had a strong positive effect, suggesting that managing emotions effectively contributes to business success. NSC ($B = 0.135$, $\beta = 0.033$, $p = .020$) had the weakest but still significant effect, implying that while social networks are beneficial, they may not be as critical as adaptability or emotional regulation in this context.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings highlight the crucial role of entrepreneurial resilience in improving firm performance among small-scale poultry farmers. Key resilience factors such as adaptability, perseverance, emotional regulation, and networking and social capital all positively influence business success, with adaptability emerging as the most significant. This indicates that poultry farmers who can quickly adjust to external shocks and market fluctuations are more likely to sustain and expand their businesses. The study adds to the growing body of knowledge on entrepreneurial resilience and its impact on firm performance, particularly in Nigeria's agricultural sector. To enhance these outcomes, farmers should be educated on stress management techniques and emotional intelligence to improve their decision-making capabilities. Additionally, poultry farmers should be encouraged to participate in cooperative societies and industry networks to leverage collective knowledge and business opportunities.

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