

## Studying the Effects of Trade Conflicts on Small Business owned by Gen X

ChelamCherla Lavanya\*  
S.Vennilaa Shree\*\*

### Abstract

*The influence of trade wars on company activities and the risk-reducing strategies that companies are using are subject matters of this study. By applying a combination of factor analysis and non-parametric tests, the research investigates important aspects such as the cost of raw materials, the adjustment of prices, supply chain reliance, digital transformation, and financial instability. The results show that trade conflicts have the most consistent impacts in the areas of increased raw material costs, price adjustments, and dependence on critical inputs, while other factors like reduced profits, digital transformation, and market diversification show varied effects. The type of business and the dependence on inputs are important factors in determining which companies are most affected, and there are gender differences in certain adaptive behaviours, such as local sourcing and price adjustments. The study suggests that proactive planning, resource flexibility, and sector-specific strategies are crucial for any company to achieve stability in operations when trade disruptions occur. The findings will be useful for policymakers, industry players, and researchers who want to build resilience in businesses during global trade war scenarios which are getting more volatile by the day.*

**Keywords:** Trade Conflicts, Business Adaptation Strategies, Raw Material Costs, Supply Chain Resilience, Pricing Adjustments, Gender Differences, Vulnerability.

### Introduction

The global conflicts in trade have increasingly been a source of chaos in supply chains, besides the rising costs of production, and creating uncertainty in distribution and retailing. The impact of these disruptions could be via tariffs, restrictions on imports and exports, political tensions, or sudden changes in the policies of international trade, leading to the increased costs of raw materials, price variations, and changing market dynamics. For companies, it is very important to be able to deal with such problems if they want to keep their profitability, competitiveness, and even their existence in the long run. Firms may use different adaptation techniques, such as the diversification of suppliers, local sourcing of materials, price changes, opening new markets, digitalization, and participating in initiatives that improve capacity.

The first step in the identification of weaknesses and the designing of prompt remedies is to know the area where trade conflicts and firms overlap and how the businesses react. It is possible that the business type, years of operation, and dependence on critical inputs may factor in determining the level of disruption experienced and the strategies employed. Moreover, it is possible that gender could be a factor influencing the way in which an entrepreneur chooses to apply the adaptive measures. Even though the impact of trade conflicts has become more pronounced, there have not been many empirical studies that look into the relationship between these conflicts and business operations, along with behavioural responses and gender differences.

\*Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Vels University[VISTAS], Pallavaram Chennai.

\*\*Professor/Supervisor, Department of Commerce, Vels University, Pallavaram, Chennai

The present research tries to close this gap through a comprehensive approach by studying the impacts of trade conflicts on the business sector, evaluating adaptation strategies and specifying the vital aspects of both vulnerability and resilience. This research intends to map the influence of trade conflicts on the operations, finance, and strategic reactions of small businesses owned by Generation X to the fullest extent possible.

### Significance of the Study

**Small Business Owners:** The research will provide information about the impact of trade conflicts on their operations and present them with practical strategies to deal with disruptions in their businesses.

**Policy Makers:** The outcome of the study might lead to the creation of pro-small-business policies, grants, or measures that would assist small businesses during trade conflicts.

**Researchers and Academics:** This research adds new insights into the available literature by studying the consumer group known as Gen X which has been ignored in the trade war research bibliography so far.

**Business Support Organizations:** The findings could help in developing and directing training as well as providing resources that will make small-scale enterprises more resistant to external shocks.

### Problem Statement

Economic uncertainties that are generally accompanied by trade conflicts come in the form of increased tariffs, disrupted supply chains, and higher operational costs. Small businesses, especially those led by Generation X entrepreneurs, usually do not have the same financial capability as their counterparts to deal with these negative impacts. Many of these small businesses depend on imported materials, have a small number of suppliers, and their profit margins are very tight. Yet, the situation is such that there is scant empirical evidence elaborating how trade conflicts affect Gen X owners in terms of financial performance and the adoption of strategies to compete. This research intends to fill the void by investigating through interviews the challenges and coping strategies of Gen X small business owners during trade conflict periods.

### Literature Review

#### Trade Conflicts and Global Economic Disruptions

Trade conflicts usually come up when countries impose tariffs, quotas, or restrictions as a way of punishing others for what they consider to be unfair trade practices. Bown and Irwin (2019) state that international supply chains get disrupted, production costs go up and firms that trade across borders get uncertain when such conflicts occur. More often than not, the disruptions go through global markets and affect pricing, availability of goods and business confidence. Krugman, Obstfeld, and Melitz (2018) assert that the setting up of trade barriers willy-nilly usually means a slow-down in economic activity and such a situation negatively impacts both domestic and international business.

#### Impact of Trade Conflicts on Small Businesses

The case here is that small businesses get hit harder in trade conflicts because they cannot weather the storm financially and are not able to compete in terms of bargaining power with large firms. U.S. Small Business Administration (2020) holds that high tariffs drive up the cost of inputs for small enterprises and this consequently leads to lower profit margins and inefficient operations. Sometimes

even small companies that rely on imports heavily have hard times trying to adjust their business strategies in the light of... Handley & Limão, 2017. The problem is made worse by the unavailability of alternative suppliers, and the lack of consumers' readiness to bear the extra costs.

### **Characteristics of Generation X Entrepreneurs**

Generation X entrepreneurs, also known as, those born between 1965 and 1980, are described as being down-to-earth, self-governing, and very knowledgeable in conventional business models. According to Lyons et al. (2019), the owners of Gen X businesses frequently regard consumer trust and relationships as their basic elements. Their critical mass has a substantial say in the selection of their risk appetite, that is to say, they would risk being stuck with a supplier or business model for too long before jumping off, even if there is an outside force pushing them. Gen X entrepreneurs are often found in mature business sectors and are very reliant on supply chains that are not only stable but also consistent, which makes them vulnerable to trade wars Parker (2018) mentions this.

### **Financial Effects of Trade Conflicts on Gen X Owned Small Businesses**

The financial aspect of the operating performances of businesses has been directly worn on their shoulders as a result of wars; thus, trade conflicts have operating costs increased, price instability, and supply availability disruptions as some of the ways through which they have directly drained the financial aspect of operating performances of businesses. Amiti, Redding, and Weinstein (2019) reported that due to the imposition of tariffs during the last trade war, the cost of import input which most small businesses rely on—and in fact, these businesses has increased significantly. Such financial pressures on Gen X-owned businesses are certainly an alarming issue since they mainly rely on constant inflow of revenue for their financial stability in mid to late career years. The study indicates that prolonged cost increase usually leads to reduction of profit margins and hence, discouragement to investment or expansion (OECD, 2019).

### **Coping and Adaptive Strategies During Trade Conflicts**

Trade-related challenges are often response of small businesses by employing strategies like changing suppliers, changing prices, applying local sourcing, or using digital platforms. Williams and Vorley (2015) mention that entrepreneurial resilience is one of the key factors in uncertain environments. For the Gen X entrepreneurs, adapting means competently using both the traditional and modern, cutting-edge methods. The International Trade Centre (2020) has it that companies that promptly switch to new suppliers or digital procurement tools are the ones that bear the least effect of trade disruptions.

### **Research Gap**

The topic of trade disputes has been a common subject in the economic and policy literature, yet only a few empirical studies have investigated their direct impact on businesses and their strategies to cope with the situation. This is due to the fact that most of the existing literature concentrates on the macroeconomic effects or trading performance at the sector level, while the firm-level behavioural reactions receive little attention. Moreover, the influence of gender, type of business, and input reliance on the selection of adaptive strategies has not been sufficiently investigated. Moreover, there is a lack of comprehension in determining which strategies are effective in consistently reducing the impact of trade-related disruptions and where these effects are different depending on firms, sectors, or demographic groups. This research fills these gaps by conducting a firm-level analysis of the

impacts of trade conflicts, determining the main factors that contribute to both vulnerability and resilience, and exploring the differences in adaptive behaviours between women and men.

### Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyse the impact of trade conflicts on the financial performance of small businesses owned by Gen X, which includes the shifts in revenue, costs, and profit margins.

The second objective of the study is to investigate the adaptive strategies employed by Gen X small business owners in reaction to trade-related disruptions, such as the adjustment of supply chains, the search for alternative sources, and the implementation of different pricing strategies.

### Research Questions

In what ways do conflicts over trade affect the financial performance of small businesses owned by the Gen X cohort?

What methods do Gen X minor entrepreneurs employ to tackle disruptions caused by trade conflicts?

### Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the impact of trade conflicts Research was primarily conducted on the business operations and the adaptive strategies that different companies employed. A systematic methodology was used to collect data from a wide-ranging sample of businesses operating in different sectors that consisted of structured questionnaires concentrating on the areas of raw material costs, pricing changes, supply chain reliance, digital adoption, financial uncertainty, and market exploration. Demographic and business-specific data were also gathered as part of the study, including the gender of respondents, the number of years their businesses had been in operation, and the type of business, to support the analysis of variation in responses.

Statistical analyses included the application of factor analysis to uncover the hidden construct which was to be interpreted as the impacts of trade-conflict and the implementation of non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U) to evaluate differences in adaptive strategies based on gender. The factor loadings were very helpful in identifying which variables were the most consistent in reflecting the latent factor, while the mean ranks and significance tests were effective in showing the differences between the male and female respondents. This methodological approach results in the dual outcome of giving a theoretical understanding of trade-conflict impacts on companies and in providing a real assessment of the behaviour changes at the firm level.

### Limitations of the Study

**Sample Size and Representativeness:** The major conclusion of the study is based on a clearly defined sample of enterprises; sample size is 353 Data collected from friends and friends of friends through Google form in Chennai region

**Cross-Sectional Design:** The data collection process was carried out in only one instance, and this limited the possibility of monitoring the variations in the businesses' reactions to trade quarrels over time.

**Self-Reported Data:** It is possible that biases of some kind, such as social desirability or poor memory of business practices, will affect the results because respondents' answers are the only source of data.

**Context-Specific Factors:** external conditions, such as the global economic situation, trends in particular sectors, and government policies, might impact the results but their influence was not completely eliminated in the study.

**Limited Scope Of Variables:** although crucial adaptation tactics were analysed, other possible reactions like investments in technology, alliances, or financial hedging, were overlooked.

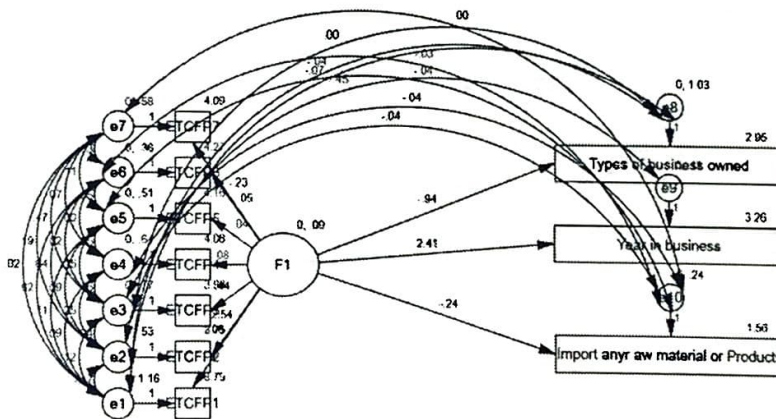
## Analysis

### Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.669	14

The reliability assessment of the 14-item scale resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.669, which indicates that the items are somewhat interrelated and assess a common construct; however, the reliability falls short of the customary cut off of 0.7 for recognized scales. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.669 can still be accepted for exploratory research or initial studies, where the slightly lower consistency is often acceptable.

### Path Diagram



### Basic Hypothesis framed

H1: The financial performance of small businesses owned by Gen X has a major drawback due to trade conflicts.

H2: The negative impacts of trade conflicts on Gen X small businesses are significantly moderated by the use of adaptive business strategies.

Chi-square = 10.118, Degrees of freedom = 5, Probability level = .072, CMIN-2.024, TLI-0.908, CFI-0.990, IFI-0.991, NFI-0.981, RMSEA -0.54.

The model fit statistics overall indicate an acceptable to good fit. The chi-square test (Chi-square = 10.118, df = 5, p = 0.072) is not significant at the 0.05 level, thus fortifying that the model-implied covariance matrix does not significantly differ from the observed covariance matrix, which is a

desirable condition in SEM. The degrees of freedom are 5, this being the difference between the number of distinct sample moments (65) and the number of parameters estimated (60), which suggests that the model is just-identified sufficient to perform a fit test.

CMIN/df = 2.024, which is under the usual cut-off point of 3, signifies good fitting.

TLI = 0.908, CFI = 0.990, IFI = 0.991, NFI = 0.981 are over 0.90, with CFI, IFI, NFI even touching the 0.95 mark, thereby proposing superb incremental fit especially when compared with a null model.

RMSEA = 0.054 (possibly a mistake for "--0.54") is under the 0.06-0.08 range and so it's labelled good approximate fit.

In general, the results combining both absolute and incremental fit indices, which are in the acceptable to the excellent range, the model can be said to fit the data well. There might be room for minor adjustments, but major misfits are not indicated.

**Regression Weights**

Relationship between the variables			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Trade conflicts have increased the cost of raw materials for my business (ETCFP1)	<---	F1				
Due to trade-related disruptions, the profits of the business have been reduced. (ETCFP2)	<---	F1	2.537	2.461	1.031	0.303
I changed my pricing plans to be able to manage the increasing costs. (ETCFP3)	<---	F1	.442	.182	2.427	0.015
I switched to online platforms to get more sales. (ETCFP4)	<---	F1	.078	.154	.509	0.611
Trade conflicts have made the financial situation of my business very uncertain. (ETCFP5)	<---	F1	.040	.137	.292	0.771
I opened up to alternative markets or customer segments because of the trade disruptions. (ETCFP6)	<---	F1	.049	.116	.422	0.673
The business has had a hard time getting supplies which has negatively impacted its financial performance. (ETCFP7)	<---	F1	-.232	.155	-1.492	0.136
Kind of business owned.	<---	F1	-.935	.268	-3.497	0.000
Number of years in business.	<---	F1	2.407	2.092	1.151	0.250
Main raw material or products.	<---	F1	-.242	.107	-2.258	0.024

**F1-Factor 1**

	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Trade conflicts have increased the cost of raw materials for my business	Conceptually Accepted
H2	Due to trade-related disruptions, the profits of the business have been reduced.	Rejected
H3	I changed my pricing plans to be able to manage the increasing costs.	Accepted
H4	I switched to online platforms to get more sales.	Rejected
H5	Trade conflicts have made the financial situation of my business very uncertain.	Rejected
H6	I opened up to alternative markets or customer segments because of the trade disruptions.	Rejected
H7	The business has had a hard time getting supplies which has negatively impacted its financial performance.	Rejected
H8	Kind of business owned.	Accepted
H9	Number of years in business.	Rejected
H10	Main raw material or products.	Accepted

**H1: Trade conflicts have impacted businesses by increasing the cost of raw materials.**

The reference indicator for the latent factor (F1) was set at a loading of 1.000 for this item. Consequently, there was no significance test carried out. Being the anchor, it indicates that the increased raw material costs are recognized as the central and definitional characteristic of the trade-conflict factor on businesses. Conceptually, H1 is supported since it is the lowest point of the factor.

**H2: Trade-related disruptions have led to lower business profits.**

A loading of 2.537 for this item suggests a strong conceptual link to the latent factor, but it is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.303$ ) and the high standard error (2.461) indicates great variability among firms. This implies that profit reduction is not a unified and common explanation for the trade conflicts across businesses. While some firms may have disruption-induced profit declines, others may have adapted by pricing, using alternative suppliers, or taking efficiency measures. Consequently, the effect is variable in the entire sample.

**H3: Price strategies have been changed by businesses in order to manage costs that have risen.**

The item in question shows a positive and statistically significant loading of 0.442 ( $p = 0.015$ ) thus indicating that pricing changes are a universal response when trade-related pressures hit businesses. It appears that firms are likely to either raise or adjust prices in response to higher costs, supply stoppages, or cost-push pressures due to trade conflicts. The strong association indicates that the factor of pricing strategy adjustments reliably reflects the latent one.

**H4: Businesses have adopted digital platforms to improve sales as a response to trade conflicts.**

The item shows the time one gets zero point zero seventy-eight, which is very small and statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.611$ ). This indicates that people using digital platforms haven't felt much pressure from trade conflicts in the sample. The adoption of technology could be a long-term trend, an internal innovation goal, or simply a matter of industry differences rather than trade disruptions. Hence, the adoption of the digital platform does not change the situation with the genuineness of the factor.

**H5: Trade conflicts have increased the level of financial uncertainty in businesses.**

This item yields a very small loading of 0.040 and is statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.771$ ), indicating that financial uncertainty does not reliably vary with the latent construct. Although trade conflicts could create uncertainty, the responses in this sample do not show a consistent pattern. Firms may perceive uncertainty for many reasons market conditions, industry volatility, or internal performance making it unrelated to the specific factor being measured.

**H6: Businesses have sought alternative markets or customer segments due to trade disruptions.**

The loading of 0.049, paired with a non-significant p-value (0.673), suggests that seeking alternative markets is not a consistent behavioural response associated with the latent factor. Firms may or may not explore new markets depending on their size, resources, flexibility, and industry context. This inconsistency indicates that such actions are not systematically explained by trade conflicts in this dataset.

**H7: The fines imposed by the governments have indirectly affected the financial performance of the companies due to supply shortages.**

This item has a negative loading of  $-0.232$  and the effect is statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.136$ ). Although the negative sign implies that the firms with more supply shortages might not be in line with the latent factor in the expected way, the weak statistical result doesn't allow drawing a conclusive relationship. Several external factors might have contributed to supply shortages like logistics, seasonal issues, or global demand not just trade conflicts.

**H8: The type of business owned significantly influences how trade conflicts affect the firm.**

The item presents a very strong negative loading of  $-0.935$  which is very significant ( $P$  value  $< 0.001$ ). This means that businesses of different types manufacturing, retail, services, or import-dependent enterprises, for example will be differently impacted by trade conflicts. The indicated strong relationship suggests that the effects of trade disruptions differ systematically among business categories. Thus, H8 is confirmed.

**H9: Years in business lead to the different impacts experienced by companies due to the trade conflict.**

Although the coefficient for this item is large ( $2.407$ ), it is not statistically significant ( $P$  value =  $0.250$ ). The high standard error indicates a large variability implying that business maturity or longevity does not consistently determine how companies encounter trade-related challenges. Both experienced and new businesses will still have different levels of resilience or vulnerability that will lead to an inconsistent pattern.

**H10: The reliance on critical raw materials or products considerably affects the susceptibility to trade disputes.**

A notable negative loading of  $-0.242$  ( $p = 0.024$ ) has been observed for this factor, indicating that companies with greater dependency on certain raw materials or crucial products suffer more from trade disruptions. The negative coefficient points out that this reliance amplifies the risk, thus making the business a lot more prone to supply chain fluctuations, tariffs, or shortages caused by the trade conflicts.

**One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) Normality Test**

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Diversified my suppliers because of trade conflicts	Source more materials locally reduce the impact of international disruptions	Adjusted my pricing strategies to cope with increased costs	Adopted digital platforms to improve sales	Reduced non-essential expenses to manage financial pressure	Sought alternative markets	Participate in training to learn how to respond to trade changes
N		353	353	353	353	353	353	353
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	4.2125	4.1615	4.2691	4.3371	4.0567	4.1076	4.1473
	Std. Deviation	.66799	.71469	.60169	.60978	.72470	.74603	.67492

Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.274	.247	.321	.299	.268	.223	.275
	Positive	.274	.247	.321	.299	.256	.223	.275
	Negative	-.236	-.235	-.245	-.272	-.268	-.219	-.249
Test Statistic		.274	.247	.321	.299	.268	.223	.275
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>
a. Test distribution is Normal.								
b. Calculated from data.								
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.								

The K-S test statistics (the values range from 0.223 to 0.321) are rather high, which indicates a strong deviation from a normal distribution. p-values, which are the Asymptotic Significance (0.000), are even more significant as they are way under the common 0.05 cutoff for all the variables. In effect, the null hypothesis of normality is not accepted for any variable. To put it differently, there is no variable that can be characterized as normally distributed. The positive as well as negative maximum differences point out that the distributions are not symmetric but rather skewed.

The outcome suggests that the participants' responses are concentrated in certain areas rather than being scattered out uniformly, which could be caused by the same high level of agreement among the respondents. As the data does not follow a normal distribution, it is suggested that researchers should use non-parametric statistical methods for their analyses that require distributional assumption, or they should make sure that the multivariate techniques they use.

**Mann-Whitney Test**

Ranks	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Diversified my suppliers because of trade conflicts	Male	142	180.37	25612.50
	Female	211	174.73	36868.50
	Total	353		
Source more materials locally to reduce the impact of international disruptions	Male	142	164.40	23345.00
	Female	211	185.48	39136.00
	Total	353		
Adjusted my pricing strategies to cope with increased costs	Male	142	163.98	23285.50
	Female	211	185.76	39195.50
	Total	353		
Adopted digital platforms to improve sales	Male	142	177.38	25187.50
	Female	211	176.75	37293.50
	Total	353		
Reduced non-essential expenses to manage financial pressure	Male	142	178.43	25337.50
	Female	211	176.04	37143.50
	Total	353		
Sought alternative markets	Male	142	178.27	25314.00
	Female	211	176.15	37167.00
	Total	353		
Participate in training to learn how to respond to trade changes	Male	142	178.74	25380.50
	Female	211	175.83	37100.50
	Total	353		

The ranks table presents a summary of the average ranks assigned by male and female respondents to each business-response strategy. The higher mean ranks are indicative of the stronger consensus or higher reported usage of that particular strategy. The findings indicate a divergence in the way male and female respondents identified their coping strategies as a result of trade disputes.

In the case of the response “Diversified my suppliers because of trade conflicts,” the mean rank of male respondents is ever so slightly higher (180.37) than that of females (174.73). This indicates that males were a bit more inclined to switch suppliers, though the discrepancy seems small.

In the case of “Source more materials locally to reduce the impact of international disruptions,” the female respondents give a mean rank of 185.48 which is higher than that of the male respondents who provide a rank of 164.40. This shows that in response to challenges in international trading, firms would get their materials from local sources more if they were women. A similar pattern is observed for “Adjusted my pricing strategies to cope with increased costs,” where female respondents again show higher mean ranks (185.76) than males (163.98). This suggests that females were more active in modifying their pricing strategies when costs increased.

The mean ranks for males (177.38) and females (176.75) are closely related, showing almost equal digital adoption across genders, for the statement “Adopted digital platforms to improve sales.” The small difference between the two ranks does not suggest the existence of any significant variation based on gender.

In the situation of “Reduced non-essential expenses to manage financial pressure,” the mean rank of males (178.43) is a little higher than that of females (176.04). This minor difference implies that the two genders cut non-essential expenses nearly to the same degree, with males being just a bit more of a case that they did so.

In the case of “Sought alternative markets,” male respondents' average rank of 178.27 was slightly higher than females' average rank of 176.15. The disparity between the genders is so small that one could say this among other practices, namely from the aspect of seeking new markets, is practically equal across genders.

The last attribute was “Participated in training to learn how to respond to trade changes,” and male ranks were slightly higher (178.74) than female ones (175.83). It can thus be inferred that males were just a little bit more active in participating in teaching sessions showed in the report on trade shifts, yet the difference is almost negligible.

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>							
	Diversified my suppliers because of trade conflicts	Source more materials locally to reduce the impact of international disruptions	Adjusted my pricing strategies to cope with increased costs	Adopted digital platforms to improve sales	Reduced essential expenses to manage financial pressure	non- Sought alternative markets	Participate in training to learn how to respond to trade changes
Mann-Whitney U	14502.500	13192.000	13132.500	14927.500	14777.500	14801.000	14734.500
Wilcoxon W	36868.500	23345.000	23285.500	37293.500	37143.500	37167.000	37100.500
Z	-.562	-2.072	-2.235	-.064	-.238	-.206	-.289
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.574	.038	.025	.949	.812	.837	.772

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

The Mann–Whitney U tests have shown that gender is a significant factor only in two of the business adaptation strategies among those considered. More precisely, there was a statistically significant difference between the two genders as far as the likelihood of male and female respondents to source more materials locally ( $p = .038$ ) and to modify prices in line with the increased costs ( $p = .025$ ). This is indicative of one gender being more inclined than the other to take these measures when facing trade-related disruptions. The other strategies, such as diversifying suppliers, moving to digital

platforms, cutting non-essential costs, exploring new markets, and training, did not reveal any significant gender differences either, since the p-values for these strategies were all above .05. This suggests that, in terms of the majority of adaptive behaviors tested, trade and business challenges are equally responded to by males and females, as their reactions are similar.

## Findings

### ✓ **Impact of Trade Conflicts on Raw Material Costs**

✓ One of the main and most noticeable consequences of the trade conflicts is the increase in raw material prices, which, in fact, is the main indicator of the financial impacts related to the trade disputes.

### ✓ **Effect on Business Profits**

✓ Trade disputes do not uniformly bring down profits for all businesses, since some of them manage to change their prices, improve their efficiency or switch to different suppliers, resulting in various outcomes.

### ✓ **Pricing Strategy Adjustments –**

✓ It's almost a rule that the companies facing trade tensions will raise their prices as a means to cover the costs, which has become a behavioural change constantly seen in the market.

### ✓ **Adoption of Digital Platforms**

✓ The influence of trade conflicts on digital adoption is not significant; rather, it seems that factors such as technological evolution or internal innovation ambitions are the main reasons behind the adoption, not the short-term trade pressures.

### ✓ **Financial Uncertainty**

✓ Trade disputes do not create financial uncertainty for all companies and the perceived uncertainty may be influenced by several factors other than trade disturbances.

### ✓ **Seeking Alternative Markets**

✓ Diversifying into new markets is not a one-size-fits-all solution; it is dictated by the firm's resources, its capacity to adapt, and the overall industry view.

### ✓ **Supply Shortages and Financial Performance**

✓ Varying supply shortages and their financial effects on the companies are not simply dependent on the trade wars; rather the latter is also a part of a bigger picture that includes logistics and global demand.

### ✓ **Influence of Business Type**

✓ The nature of the business is very much determinative of the impact of the trade disputes on the different companies, and the characteristics that are specific to the sector determine which sectors will be more vulnerable and which ones will be able to respond.

### ✓ **Business Longevity**

✓ Being in operation for a certain period does not always give a clear indication of how the company will be affected by the wars; new and old companies alike have shown different levels of resilience.

### ✓ **Dependence on Key Raw Materials**

✓ Businesses that have a great dependence on critical raw materials are at a greater risk of suffering losses due to trade disturbances, thus proving once again that input dependence is a major factor influencing the impact of the trade conflict.

### ✓ **Gender Differences in Adaptive Responses**

✓ Women are generally more inclined than men to resort to local sourcing of materials and price adjustments as their main responses, while considerable gender parity is noted in the case of the other responses (digital adoption, expense reduction, alternative markets, training).

### ✓ **Overall Conceptual Insight**

✓ The main impact of trade disputes is on the cost structures and the vulnerability of inputs, while the adaptation of responses is greatly determined by the type of business, the level of resource dependency, and gender, to a minimal extent. Other impacts, such as loss of profit, financial uncertainty, and digital adoption, are less frequently and consistently associated with trade disruptions.

### Suggestions

Drawing on the outcomes of the, the first recommendation for businesses is giving priority to strategies that increase the ability to withstand trade conflicts, mainly through managing the reliance on essential raw materials and adopting price policies that are flexible. Businesses that are dependent on a specific input may think about widening their supplier base or using local sources to make their company less exposed to the risk of getting supply cuts. Governments and industry organizations might facilitate the way for these activities by offering directions, training programs, or financial incentives for the diversity of the supply chain and the use of adaptive pricing strategies. Besides, since the type of business determines the severity of the impact of trade conflicts, it would be important to have sector-specific supporting measures that tackle the problems of manufacturing, retail or service companies. Promoting targeted-building and knowledge-sharing initiatives can assist both male and female entrepreneurs in deploying efficient coping mechanisms. All in all, the encouraging of proactive planning, strategic adaptation, and resource flexibility will enable businesses to lessen trade disruptions' the negative impact and keep their operations stable.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, trade conflicts have an uneven but still a significant impact on businesses mainly through the rising costs of raw materials, adjustments in pricing strategies, and the dependency on key inputs being the most consistent. Adaptive strategies such as local sourcing and price adjustments are partly determined by gender and a company's characteristics while other impacts like profit decline, financial uncertainty, and digital adoption can differ greatly among companies and are even unconnected to trade disruptions. The vulnerability of a business depends mainly on its type and input dependence which makes it crucial to have sector-specific strategies and to be resilient in supply chains. Thus, companies that promptly change their prices, diversify their suppliers, and manage their resource dependencies are in a better position to bear trade-related strains and keep their operations stable in the less predictable global market.

### Future Implications

The results of this research carry a number of future implications which are significant not only for companies but also for policymakers and researchers. Firms need to become aware of the importance of supply chain resilience and resource management in lessening the effects of trade conflicts, diversifying suppliers and local sourcing where possible being the main points in this regard. The adjustment of prices as a strategic move and operational planning done proactively are going to be the major tools for dealing with cost pressures and market volatility. Policymakers might take these insights as the foundation for the creation of various types of support programs pertaining to specific sectors, capacity building, and granting of incentives that will make organizations better suited to cope with disruptions in globalization. For investigators, the research underscores the growing demand for long-term studies into the varying impacts of trade disputes and the need for more intensive examination of the particular weaknesses of different sectors and the influence of gender on the nature of adaptive responses. All in all, being aware of these dynamics will allow companies to foresee difficulties, create resilience that lasts for a long time, and come up with better tactics in a global economy that is ever more interconnected and uncertain.

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