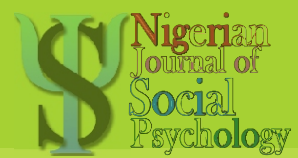


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## Effects of Sit at Home on Small and Medium Scale Businesses in Abakaliki Metropolis

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### Abstract

*This study examined the effects of sit at home on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis. The broad objective of the study is to generally evaluate the effects of sit at home on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis. Survey research design was adopted with questionnaires distributed as data collection instrument. Analytically, the study employed simple percentages, frequency table and chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) to test the hypotheses. The findings from the study showed that sit at home has significant impact on small and medium scale enterprises in Abakaliki metropolis. The study also revealed that releasing of Nnamdi Kanu unconditionally, dialogue between federal government of Nigeria and the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB), observing sit at home order on Mondays increase security in southeast and constitutional amendments to enshrine the rotation of key political positions among the six geopolitical zones of were significant remedies to sit at home on small and medium scale enterprises in Abakaliki metropolis. The study concluded that the IPOB's sit-at-home order had a damaging effect on the small and medium scale businesses of the Southeast region. The study recommends among other things that; government should come to terms of agreement with the IPOB hierarchy to restore sound business environment for expected level of growth of SMEs in the Southeast region.*

**Keywords:** *Sit at Home, Small and Medium Scale Businesses, Chi-square, Abakaliki Metropolis.*

### Introduction

Small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs) are businesses that maintain revenues, assets or a number of employees below a certain threshold. The place of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the achievement of economic growth especially in a developing country like Nigeria can never be over-emphasized. SMEs remain the foundation as well as the building block in the realization of any meaningful and sustainable growth in an economy. SMEs constitute the driving force in the attainment of industrial growth and development. This is basically due to their great potential in ensuring diversification and expansion of industrial production as well as the attainment of the basic objectives of growth. For sustainable economy, SMEs have been stressed as capable of helping in bringing about positive economic turn around and complementing the effort of the existing medium and large scales industries (Osuagwu, 2019).

The recognition of the importance of the roles of the SMEs as catalyst and engine of growth has prompted the increased attention and specific education on the method and approach to build and sustain a truly viable private sector dominated by small and medium scale enterprise (SMEs). Such economic contributions are obvious in the mobilization of idle financial resources, the conservation of foreign exchange, utilization of local raw materials,

specialist suppliers to large companies, adding varieties and choice for the consumers, checking the monopolistic tendency power, providing a source of innovation, breeding ground for new industries and above all employment creation (Bamidele, 2012).

SMEs are a veritable tool for economic growth and development. They play a key role in promoting prosperity by creating new jobs and increasing a region's economic prosperity (Maksimov, 2017). Due to the importance of small businesses, governments in developing and developed nations see them as a means of employment, innovation and wealth creation (Mills and McCarthy, 2016). Small business is important for the growth of products and services' productivity while it creates employment at a smaller financial cost, particularly in the rapidly developing service sector. More than half of the jobs in developing countries are created by SMEs, and they dominate the private sector space in the same economies (Kumar, 2017; Lorenz and Pommet, (2018). Poverty reduction and wealth creation in impoverished regions cannot merely rely on multinational enterprises or the central government for solutions. Still, they must depend on their entrepreneurship ability to innovate, plan and execute ideas leading to small businesses as a tool for wealth creation and poverty alleviation (Easterly & Reshef, 2014).

SMES utilize local raw materials and technology thereby aiding the realization of the goal of self-reliance. Also, governments at various levels (local, state and federal) have in one way or the other facilitated the performance of the SMEs. While some have formulated policies aimed at facilitating and empowering the growth and development and performance of the SMEs, others had focused on assisting the SMEs to grow through soft loans and other fiscal incentives in order to enhance the socio-economic development of the economy like alleviating poverty, employment generation, enhance human development, and improve social welfare of the people (Oreoluwa, 2018).

Thus, small and medium scale businesses in the Southeast part of Nigeria are losing N4.618 trillion (\$10.495 billion) annually for observing the sit-at-home order on Mondays (Anudu, 2023). Several sit-at-home orders have been mandated in the Southeastern region of Nigeria to demonstrate for the liberation of their freedom fighter, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu (Ayitogo, 2021). The sit-at-home orders are usually observed on Mondays, and on other days of the week, Nnamdi Kanu is to appear before the court of competent jurisdiction (Emeruwa, 2021). The five states in the Southeastern part of Nigeria (Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra, Imo and Abia State) are bound by the stay-at-home orders, as well as states in the South-South (Delta, Rivers) and the North Central (Benue, Kogi State) (Ayitogo, 2021). The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) consider themselves to be the owners of the Southeast region of the nation as well as some states in the aforementioned geographical zones where these decrees are enforceable (Ugwu, 2022). The sit-at-home orders affect almost all of Nigeria's geopolitical regions. This is due to restrictions on movement into the Southeastern states from other geopolitical zones of the nation on the days the directives are to be observed (Ozibo & Okorie, 2022).

Economic activities are halted on days the orders are to be observed, as no one is allowed to carry out any transactions intra and inter states. Individuals who ignore the orders will be either killed or forced to comply (Ugwu, 2022). Economic activities are disrupted on the days the sit-at-home orders are observed in the Eastern part of Nigeria owing to the fact that productive assets and resources are placed on hold (Okeoma, 2021). In their study, Vaskov, Pienknagura, and Ricci (2021) show how limits on people's freedom of movement harm economic activities, particularly in nations with low economic growth. Okafor (2022) said that from 2011 to 2015, social disturbance in Nigeria caused a cumulative drop in GDP.

According to Odili (2021), the sit-at-home order has resulted in a significant GDP drop for the Southeast region of the country when compared to other geopolitical regions. Moreover, Simon Ekpa was quoted by Azeez (2022) as saying that the sit-at-home order has cost the Nigerian government an estimated \$1 billion in weekly revenue. The persistent stay-at-home order has become an annoyance for the people, as it disrupts their daily lives and has caused a backlash and regress to the economy of the eastern region of Nigeria. The consequence of the order is experienced in the economic, social, educational, and all other parts of the Southeastern Nigerian economy (Ozibo & Okorie, 2022).

The notion that the sit-at-home order is ruining the growth of Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) in eastern Nigeria is the driving force of this study. SMEs constitute a vital engine for the economic growth and development of the Southeast region (Onuoha, 2010). Igbo entrepreneurial activities have been observed to be a sine qua non for the economies of the region and Nigeria. There is also evidence that the quality of life of the people in both rural and urban settings is hugely affected by the proceeds they make from running their businesses on a daily basis. Therefore, disruptions like the sit-at-home order would have grave consequences for the livelihood of people in the region and for the entire region in general. This theme has attracted scholarly attempts and has continued to be a theme of discussion among scholars. It has attracted a lot of qualitative studies, but very little empirical investigation. Most studies focused on the impact of the sit-at-home order on the economy of the Southeast region without giving attention to the nature of the impact or how peoples small and medium scale businesses. On this note, the researcher is poised to ascertain the impact of sit-at-home order on the economy of southeast Nigeria from the viewpoint of small and medium enterprises.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As a sovereign nation, Nigeria has continued to face separatist agitations or struggles after the unsuccessful Biafran independence attempt of 1967 to 1970. the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB), movement for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB), Boko haram Islamic State Movement (BKISM), Oodua People's Congress (OPC), middle Belt Front (MBF), and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) are some of Nigeria's most well-known separatist and sectarian organizations. Organizations for self-determination, separatists, nationalists, civil rights organizations, and organizations for the rights of indigenous peoples are a few of these groups. All because of poor government leadership, Nigerians, especially those in the south-east of the country, endured years of social neglect, economic exclusion, and political exile before the Biafra agitation began.

According to Eze (2019), since the Nigerian civil conflict, also known as the Biafran conflict, ended in 1970, pain, losses, and regrets have persisted in the thoughts of both those who fought on the Nigerian side and those who fought on the Biafran side. he went on to say that although it was anticipated that the open wounds of the Biafran struggle would have closed up following the conflict, which lasted from July 6, 1967, to January 15, 1970, the Nigerian government has not done enough to soothe weak nerves. The government used intimidation and gagging measures against anyone who speaks out about the agitation, such as the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) (p.12), rather than inviting Biafrans to a round table for conversation.

Thus, the frequency of the sit at home order has become a thorn in the flesh of the people as it affects their daily living and has triggered a backlash and retrogression to the economy of the eastern region of Nigeria. The effect of the order is felt in the economic, social, educational

and every other sectors of the economy of Southeastern Nigeria. The notion that the sit-at-home order is ruining the economy of eastern Nigerian is the drive of this study. It is known that most people from the south-east survive on buying and selling of goods and services, their wealth is said to come from the market place. Now, at every sit-at-home order, the market places are closed restricting people from going out in pursuit of their daily bread and going about their businesses because no one sells nor comes out to buy as there are threats to life if failure to adhere to the order. The sit at home orders also gives room for hoodlums to perpetrate their acts of stealing, burning people's products and so on. Hence, the researcher is poised to investigate the extent to which the sit-at-home order has impacted on small and medium scale businesses in the Southeast region, using Abakaliki in Ebonyi State as a study unit. The following research questions will guide the study:

1. To what extent does sit at home order significantly impact on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis?
2. Is there any significant remedies to sit at home order on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis?

### **Objectives of the study**

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effects of sit at home order on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Determine the impact of sit at home on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis.
2. Ascertain if there is any significant remedies to sit at home on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)**

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a nationalist separatist group in Nigeria that aims to restore the Republic of Biafra, a country which seceded from Nigeria prior to the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) and later rejoined Nigeria after its defeat by the Nigerian military. Since 2021, IPOB and other Biafran separatist groups have been fighting a low-level guerilla conflict in southeastern Nigeria against the Nigerian government (Ekpo & Agorye, 2019). The group was founded in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu, a British Nigerian political activist known for his advocacy of the contemporary Biafran independence movement. It was deemed a terrorist organization by the Nigerian government in 2017 under the Nigerian Terrorism Act. As of May 2022, the United Kingdom started denying asylum to members of IPOB who engaged in human rights abuses, though the U.K. government clarified that IPOB had not been designated as a terrorist organization (Mark, Obi & Oham, 2022).

IPOB has criticized the Nigerian federal government for poor investment, political alienation, inequitable resource distribution, ethnic marginalization, and heavy military presence, extrajudicial killings in the South-Eastern, South-Central and parts of North-Central regions of the country (Owoeye, Ezeanya & Obiegbunam, 2022). They equally note that in recent years, it has gained significant media attention for becoming a frequent target of political crackdowns by the Nigerian government. It also has numerous sites and communication channels serving as the only trusted social apparatus educating and inculcating firsthand information and news to its members.

### **Sit at Home Order**

The Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) introduced a sit-at-home order in August 2021 as a means of putting pressure on the Nigerian government to release its leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu who is standing trial for alleged treasonable felony and terrorism. The sit at home order is a law instituted by the (IPOB) to respect their leader by staying at home every Monday of the week and any other days Nnamdi Kanu is appearing in court. This implies that everybody in South East will all be in the house for twenty four hours in honour to their leader at the custody of DSS at Abuja (Mark, 2022).

Sit at home is therefore seen as a day set aside and unanimously agreed as a principle to honour the leader of Indigenous people of Biafra. Owoeye, (2022) note that the principle of sit at home has been made a normal routine in the lives of every Igbo man and woman in the South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria which the group believe to be a guiding strategy to show Nigerian government that they are due to be politically free to be an independent nation. The sit at home has been turned to a day in Igbo land of the five South East states to be more honorably valued and specially termed as precious to be respected. It has been christened a memorable day in the entire Igbo land and the Indigenous People of Biafra has continued to use such days to commemorate some events that happened during the Biafra - Nigerian war that lasted for three years between 1967 to 1970, where millions of Igbo were massacred in a civil war (Osita, Anoke & Eze, 2022). Among these commemoration are to remember the past heroes who worked assiduously to free Biafra from negative situation in the past. These were people who truly lost their precious lives in order to protect the integrity of the independent of Igbo race during the Biafra-Nigerian civil war.

The sentiments attached to the sit at home order, other than to honour Nnamdi kanu, has generated a comfort occasion in the lives of the Igbo that people tended to embrace it. This prompted Akpan (2021) to assert that sit at home order became comfortable in the mind of people of Igbo extraction as they see it as a day of celebration. Since people are not expected to step out of their homes in those days, every economic and social activities in South-East cease to operate during the period as people sit at home to celebrate the fallen heroes. Akpan equally notes that that sit at home is turned to festival and respected day in the land of Igbo.

Collaborating this position, Ejikendu (2022) regards sit at home as the days set aside by the people of South-East to honor the gods of Igbo land and in respect to the leaders who are fighting to ensure Igbos are freed from the black hand of Nigeria, while to some people as seen by Owoeye (2022), it is remarkable day and a sign to show that Igbos are due to gain freedom from Nigeria. However, Osita (2022) note that while the people initially embraced the order, the continued sit at home for years now has turned the minds of the people to believe that the order has become very uncomfortable to the people due to its socio-economic impact on the people.

### **Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs)**

SMEs are a veritable tool for economic growth and development. They play a key role in promoting prosperity by creating new jobs and increasing a region's economic prosperity (Maksimov, 2017). Due to the importance of small businesses, governments in developing and developed nations see them as a means of employment, innovation and wealth creation (Mills and McCarthy, 2016). Small business is important for the growth of products and services' productivity while it creates employment at a smaller financial cost, particularly in the rapidly developing service sector. More than half of the jobs in developing countries are created by SMEs, and they dominate the private sector space in the same economies (Kumar, 2017; Lorenz and Pommet, 2018).



Gulani and Usman (2018) opined that SMEs were entities with a minimum of five personnel with a minimum capital of not less than 5,000,000 naira. The characterization of SMEs based on the frameworks of the Federal Ministry of Commerce (2015), SMEDAN (2017), CBN (2018) and Gulani and Usman (2018) correspond with the views of Fatai (2011), Khan and Dalu (2015), Peter, et al (2018) and Bakhtiari, Breunig, Magnani & Zhang (2020). Extant literature suggested that definitions of SMEs differed across nations and were based on dynamics like the country's level of business activities, economic growth and development, size of SMEs and particularly, the challenges faced by SMEs. In the view of Ogechukwu (2009), SMEs can be characterized in terms of capital outlay, employee numbers, turnover, fixed capital investment, availability of plant and machinery, market share and growth rate.

In Nigeria, dynamics such as asset base (excluding costs of land), number of personnel and annual turnover are employed to characterize SMEs. For the purpose of this study, therefore, SMEs were perceived as having the characterizations of SMEDAN (2017) and CBN (2018). Interestingly, with the increasing number of SMEs in Nigeria, the need to reconcile their policies, programmes and activities became very fundamental and that led to the formation of SMEDAN in 2004 (SMEDAN was established by the government for the sole aim of regulating SMEs activities).

### **Effect of IPOB Sit at Home on Businesses in the South East**

According to Okwesilieze Nwado, people who fend for themselves through their daily handworks and small petty or retail business would be adversely affected by the decision of IPOB; it would further deteriorate the economy of the zone. The South eastern Nigeria are known for their hardworking, industriousness and businesses. And major markets in Nigeria are located at the South East, markets like Onitsha Main market and Nkwo Nnewi market. These markets are shut down on Mondays, no selling, no buying as a result the Economic system of the South East keep going down. Abia State Governor, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu as quoted in the Vanguard newspaper, (2022), "That if south easterners have adversaries wherever I believe there is a way to confront them,". If we respond by refusing to go to the market or school because someone is waging war on us, they will do everything it takes to guarantee that we continue to behave in this manner. As a result, detaining Mazi Nnamdi Kanu will be counterproductive, as detaining him will have an economic impact and will make us uneducated. The Indigenous People of Biafra's sit-at-home order is, without doubt, weakening the economy of Eastern Nigeria, thereby making people who are said to be protecting to be impoverished, and this has posed an economic threat to the daily income earners in the region. Enforcing the sit-at-home order through the instrument of fear and intimidation, IPOB had become the enemy of many residents of well-meaning Orientals. A community leader in Enugwu-Ukwu, Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State, Mrs. Nwaude, was reportedly quoted in the Vanguard newspaper (2022) that, "it was unfortunate that a group that claimed to be involved in the emancipation of the people would take actions that would cause pain on their people.

Another interviewee, Mr. Clement Aniago, a vulcanizer, described his situation as pathetic, saying it posed an economic threat to daily income earners like them. He described his situation as "pathetic and shameful", saying that, his vulcanizing machine and tools were destroyed by the people enforcing the sit-at-home order. The IPOB had claimed its directive was in solidarity with its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who is facing terrorism among other charges. The IPOB has caused panic and hardship to entire inhabitants of south-easterners through how they enforce the Monday-sit-at-home. Since the pronouncement of the Monday sit-at-home order, the situation of a majority of south-easterners, whose livelihood is dependent on

their daily activities had gone from bad to worse because they had no money for their upkeep. Without equivocation, this indicates that the IPOB's Monday sit-at-home order has continued to "fuel" the Igbo people's misery by preventing them from engaging in their usual economic and social activities on Mondays.

The truth is that nobody knows for sure if IPOB is truly the one enforcing the sit-at-home order in southeast, Nigeria or other criminal elements fulfilling an unknown mission in the region. This is because, as a group striving to liberate its people from tyranny by its adversaries, they cannot let their imagined enemies inflict greater harm on the region that the Nigerian government claims to have neglected. Furthermore, IPOB's Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, stated that "the sit-at-home order would henceforth take place only on the days Kanu would appear in court, and that the suspension of the Monday sit-at-home order by the IPOB Head of Directorate was as a result of an order from the leader of this great movement, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu." So, no sane man will destroy his home to prove a point to his enemies. A statement credited to Senator Chimaroke Nnamani, the former Governor of Enugu state, a report in BBC News, Pidgin (2021) maintained that: "There is no evidence that the IPOB's sit-at-home order has got the organization or its supporters any closer to achieving the goal for which it was established." Instead, the zone's economic, social, and political well-being has suffered." Hours, not to talk of days, without financial services, as well as the closure of commercial and government buildings, have resulted in massive economic losses as well as a significant impact on people's lives in the zone. The group's weekly sit-at-home edict in the South-east region has blocked nearly all sectors of the economy, not only commercial and social activity.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Frustration/Aggression Theory**

The theory was developed in 1939 by John Dollard and colleagues, albeit refined in 1962 by Berkowitz and Aubrey (Dajo and Akor, 2022). The theory was developed for typical explanation of violent criminal behavior in conjunction with social unrests and disturbances as a quest to achieve pressing needs from necessary authorities (Oduma and Akor, 2019). According to Dajo and Akor (2022), frustration arises when there is an unwanted interference between a goal and response which can lead to aggression. Based on the above sentiment, aggression is a resultant outcome when attempts to achieve certain goals are blocked or impeded, resulting to frustration. According to Igwe (2011), the inability to confront the source of impediment to achieving goals, subject aggrieved party directing their frustration at innocent target.

Every government is responsible for the provision of conducive social, economic and political environment upon which her citizens can successfully thrive. In practice, such environment is not easily found. For instance, on annual basis, higher institutions in Nigeria release thousands of graduates into the labour market only to be frustrated with little or no paid employment jobs (Oduma and Akor, 2019). Coupled with accumulated existing challenges, these graduates are faced with bleak futures leaving them with no other option than frustration. These experiences explain the reason behind series of civil unrests such as ethnic, religious, and communal conflicts often experienced since Nigeria returned to civil administration in 1999. In the context of the IPOB, they claimed to be frustrated of all sorts of social ill meted on them by the Nigerian government. Such social ill is majorly claimed to be marginalization of the Igbos in the social, political and economic stream of the country. On a general note, Faminu (2021) highlighted that 2020 and 2021, more than 2,000 lives have been lost in Nigeria largely because of the activities of Boko Haram, Herdsmen, Niger-Delta



militants, the Oduduwa groups, the recent EndSARs protests and the on-going IPOB sit-at-home order enforced by the Eastern Security Network (ESN). These activities cannot be said to be unconnected with bottled up anger and frustrations.

The relevance of Frustration/Aggression theory to this study is not unconnected to the fact that the IPOB conceive the Nigerian government as the main clogging body to the actualization of the independence of Biafra. The IPOB claim to be frustrated with government administration in Nigeria, where they are deprived equal representation in various agencies and parastatals as well as the seat of presidency. Mazi Nnamdi Kanu was arrested and detained for his activities which is not far from frustration albeit, the Nigerian government deem his activities inimical to the peaceful co-existence of the nation. The efforts to get Nnamdi Kanu released proved abortive, hence more frustrations to the IPOB members. This gave birth to the sit-at-home orders being observed in the Southeastern part of Nigeria. The series of social unrests experienced in Nigeria is as a result of bottled-up anger and frustration inherent in Nigeria. The alarming rate of poverty, police brutality, high level of insecurity, marginalization are some of the by-products frustrating the youths in the country's social, political economic environment. Youths and the aged see Nigerian government as a failed administration, hence the loss of trust. Social unrest is a common occurrence at the slightest provocation in the country resulting to attack on social infrastructure, unhealthy business environment for domestic and FDI and ultimately consistent decline on economic growth.

### **Empirical Review**

Owoeye, Ezeanya, and Obiegbunam (2022) examined the impact of IPOB's Monday sit-at-home order on Nigeria's political economy (socio-political and economic activity). The paper is a qualitative descriptive survey. The data was analyzed thematically with logical reasoning, with Tacoltt Parsons and David Easton's systems theory analysis serving as a theoretical guide. The study's findings revealed that IPOB's Monday sit-at-home has hurt Southeastern Nigeria's economic operations. In light of the foregoing, the study recommended, among other things, that the issue of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB, be resolved as soon as possible, since the Monday sit-at-home order was a strategy to persuade the Federal Government to release IPOB's leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, from detention.

A study carried out by Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim, and Imhonopi (2019) on IPOB's demand for self-determination and Nigeria's response to Implications of political stability. The study investigated IPOB's agitation techniques and the Nigerian government's response to IPOB agitators, as well as the implications for political stability in the country. The study used a survey research approach, with a sample size of 385 members of the IPOB taken from a sample size determination table. One of the methods used to obtain data from the respondents was an in-depth interview. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected. The investigations revealed that the government has been using unwarranted force through its cohesive agents. It was recommended among others that government should employ the carrot approach instead of the stick approach in dealing with IPOB members. The Biafran State and the Rise of IPOB: A Crack in Nigeria's National Integration was investigated by Jacob, Nwobi, and Igboji (2020). The study looked into the rise of IPOB with a single goal in mind: to figure out why the federal government's policies and programs failed to answer the country's Biafran agitators' concerns. The study analyzed how government errors aided IPOB's emergence and its challenges to national unity.

Mark, Obi, and Oham (2022) investigated the effects of the IPOB sit-at-home order on the economy of Nigeria's South-East geopolitical zone. As a framework of analysis, they used content analysis and the Relative Deprivation Theory. Secondary sources, such as internet materials, periodicals, newspaper publications, and journal articles, were used to source data for the study. IPOB is currently undermining the economy of its people, the easterners, according to the study. The study concluded that a conversation between the government and IPOB, rather than a sit-at-home order, would go a long way toward resolving whatever issues they may have.

### Methodology

The design of the study was a descriptive survey; it was a design that seeks information on the population of the study without manipulation of any variables. According to Abonyi, Okereke, Omebe and Anugwo (2005), descriptive survey researches are those studies which aim at collecting data on and describing in then in systematic manner, the characteristics and future of facts about a given population. The rationale for choosing descriptive survey research design for the present study is that the researcher collected data from a population to enable her discuss in a systematic manner, the effects of sit at home on small and medium scale businesses: A Study of Abakaliki metropolis, Ebonyi State. Similarly, the population of this study is the population of small and medium scale businesses in abakaliki while sample size is 350 small and medium scale businesses. The area of the study is abakaliki metropolis.

### Result:

**Table I: Distribution According to Sex.**

SEX	Frequency	Total	Percentage		
	Number		Percentage		Total
Male	226	230	1%	65%	66%
Female	119	120	0.3%	33.7%	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>350</b>			<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2025**

From the above table, male were more than female counterparts. The male were 230 respondents representing 66% while the female were 120 representing 34%. However, the male were 230 while female were 119 representing 66% and 34% of the respondents.

### Distribution According to Age

In this section, the researcher sought to establish the age of the business people and their responses are highlighted in the table 2 as below;

**Table 2**

SEX	Age	Frequency	Percentage	Total
Male	18 and above	226	65%	

Female	18 and above	119	35%
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<b>Total</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>
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**Source: Field work, 2025**

The results presented in Table 2 show that a significant of 226 respondents with a percentage of 65% of male had attained ages from 18 and above years, while the female counterpart consisting of 119 with a percentage of 35%. Thus, it implies that male respondents have more population than their female counterparts in Abakaliki metropolis within the age bracket.

### Level of Education

The respondents were asked to indicate their academic background. Table 3 shows the study findings on the respondents' academic background of the respondents.

**Table 3**

Sex	Education	Frequency	Percent
Female	Basic Education and above	165	48%
Male	Basic Education and above	185	52%
<b>Total</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2025**

From the Table 3, female respondents with a percentage of 48% said they had basic education and above while male respondents with a percentage of 52% had their basic education and above. This shows that males are more educated than female counterpart in Abakaliki metropolis, Ebonyi State and this may be attributed to economic and cultural factor.

**Table 4: Distribution According to Marital Status.**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	165	48%
Single	185	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field work, 2025**

From the above table, it shows that 185 (52%) of the respondents are single while 165(48) are married.

### Analysis of Respondents

This study was designed to provide answers according to research questions that were formulated earlier in chapter one.

**Research Question One:** To what extent does sit at home order significantly impact on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis?

**Table 5: View of respondents on how sit at home order disrupt economic activities**

Opinion	No of frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
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<b>Strong Agree</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table five (5) shows that (252) respondents representing 72% strongly agree that sit at home order disrupt economic activities while 128 respondents representing 8% strongly disagreed with the opinion.

**Table 6:** View of respondents on how sit at home order reduces income generation

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>No of frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strong Agree</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table six (6) shows that (190) respondents representing 54% strongly agree that sit at home order reduces income generation while (45) respondents representing 12% strongly disagree with the opinion.

**Table 7:** View of respondents on how sit at home order reduces productive work hours

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>No of frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strong Agree</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7.</b>	
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table seven (7) shows that (175) respondents representing 52% strongly agree that Sit at home order reduces productive work hours, while (75) respondents representing 21% strongly disagree with the opinion.

**Table 8:** View of respondents on how sit at home order reduces total economic output

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>No of frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strong Agree</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table nine (9) shows that (180) respondents representing 54% strongly agree that sit at home order reduces total economic output, while (55) respondents representing 15% strongly disagree with the opinion. Thus, sit at home order reduces total economic output in the southeast and Nigeria at large.

**Table 9:** View of respondents on how sit at home order increase hardship

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>No of frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strong Agree</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

**Source:** Field work, 2025

Table nine (9) shows that (190) respondents representing 54% strongly agree that sit at home order increase hardship while (45) respondents representing 12% strongly disagree with the opinion.

**Table 10:** View of respondents on how sit at home order increases in crime such as armed robbery

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>No of frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strong Agree</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7.</b>	
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

**Source:** Field work, 2025

Table ten (10) shows that (175) respondents representing 52% strongly agree that Sit at home order increase in crime such as armed robbery, while (75) respondents representing 21% strongly disagree with the opinion.

**Table 11:** View of respondents on how sit at home order increase in insecurity in southeast

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>No of frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strong Agree</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

**Source:** Field work, 2025

Table eleven (11) shows that (180) respondents representing 54% strongly agree that sit at home order increase in insecurity in southeast. While (55) respondents representing 15% strongly disagree with the opinion. Thus, sit at home order increase in insecurity in southeast.



**Research Question Two:** Is there any significant remedies to sit at home order on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis?

**Table 12:** View of respondents if Releasing of Nnamdi Kanu unconditionally will boost businesses in Southeast

Opinion	No of frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Strong Agree	170	54	54
Agree	100	28	82
Undecided	0	0	
Disagree	15	4	86
Strongly disagree	45	12	100
Total	350		

Source: Field work, 2025

Table twelve (12) shows that (170) respondents representing 54% strongly agree that releasing of Nnamdi Kanu unconditionally will boost businesses in Southeast while (45) respondents representing 12% strongly disagree with the opinion.

**Table 13:** View of respondents if dialogue between federal government and the IPOB will boost businesses in Southeast

Opinion	No of frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Strong Agree	185	52	54
Agree	75	21	79
Undecided	0	0	
Disagree	25	7.0	
Strongly disagree	75	21	100
Total	350		

Source: Field work, 2025

Table thirteen (13) shows that (185) respondents representing 52% strongly agree that dialogue between federal government and the IPOB will boost businesses in Southeast, while (75) respondents representing 21% strongly disagree with the opinion.

**Table 14:** Observe sit at home on Mondays will save lives and businesses,

Opinion	No of frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Strong Agree	185	52	54
Agree	75	21	79
Undecided	0	0	
Disagree	25	7.	
Strongly disagree	75	21	100
Total	350		

Source: Field work, 2025

Table fourteen (14) shows that (185) respondents representing 52% strongly agree that observe sit at home on Mondays will save lives and businesses, while (75) respondents representing 21% strongly disagree with the opinion.

**Table 15:** View of respondents on how increase security in southeast will boost businesses in Southeast

Opinion	No of frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Strong Agree	185	52	54
Agree	75	21	79
Undecided	0	0	
Disagree	25	7.	
Strongly disagree	75	21	100
Total	350		

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table fifteen (15) shows that 185 respondents representing 52% strongly agree that increase security in southeast will boost businesses in Southeast, while 75 respondents representing 21% strongly disagree with the opinion.

**Table 16:** View of respondents if constitutional amendments to enshrine the rotation of key political positions among the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria will boost businesses in Southeast

Opinion	No of frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative (%)
Strong Agree	152	43	43
Agree	170	48	91
Undecided	0	0	
Disagree	0	0	
Strongly disagree	38	9	100
Total	350		

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Table sixteen (16) shows that 152 respondents representing 43% strongly agree that constitutional amendments to enshrine the rotation of key political positions among the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria will boost businesses in Southeast. While 38 respondents representing 9% strongly disagree with the opinion.

### 4.3 Testing of Hypotheses

In the course of the hypothesis testing, the study used the results obtained from the tables and percentages.

The method testing hypothesis is

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where O = represents Observed frequency

E = represents Expected frequency

E =  $\frac{\text{number of questionnaire}}{\text{number of response}}$

Level of significant = 0.05

### Hypothesis One

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Sit at home has no significant impact on small and medium scale enterprises in Abakaliki metropolis.

**Table 17: Contingency table for Chi- square computations**

Table	Frequency Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
T5	252(72)	70(20)	128(8)	350
T6	190(34)	100(28)	45(12)	350
	442	170	57	
Observed Responses OR	Expected Responses ER	Residuals (OR- ER)	Square residuals (OR- ER) <sup>2</sup>	Ratio of Square Residuals to expected value (OR-ER) <sup>2</sup> /ER
252	72	180	32400	450
70	20	50	2500	125
128	8	120	14400	1800
190	54	136	18496	342
100	28	72	5184	185
45	12	33	1089	90
				<b>X<sup>2</sup>=2992</b>

$$X^2 = 2992$$

$$Df = (C-1) (R-1)$$

$$(2-1) (3-1)$$

$$(1) (2)$$

$$= 2$$

Chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>) critical table value at 0.05 is 9.925

### Decision Rule

If the calculated X<sup>2</sup> is greater than the critical value, reject the null hypothesis and otherwise accept the alternate hypothesis and if the calculated X<sup>2</sup> is less than the critical value the alternative hypothesis will be rejected and otherwise the null hypothesis accepted. From the table above, X<sup>2</sup>=2992 while the chi-square (x<sup>2</sup>) critical value at 0.05 is 9.925. This means that Sit at home has significant impact on small and medium scale enterprises in Abakaliki metropolis..

### Research Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>02</sub>.** There is no significant remedies to sit at home on small and medium scale enterprises in Abakaliki metropolis.

**Table 22: Contingency table for Chi- square computations**

Table	Frequency Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
T9	170(54)	100(28)	45(12)	350
T10	185(52)	75(21)	75(21)	350
	355	175	120	
Observed Responses OR	Expected Responses ER	Residuals (OR- ER)	Square residuals (OR- ER) <sup>2</sup>	Ratio of Square Residuals to expected value (OR-ER) <sup>2</sup> /ER

			ER)2	expected value (OR-ER)2/ER
170	54	116	13456	249
100	28	72	5184	185
45	12	33	1089	90
185	52	133	17689	340
75	21	54	2916	138
75	21	54	2916	138
				<b>X<sup>2</sup>=1140</b>

$$X^2 = 1140$$

$$Df = (C-1) (R-1)$$

$$(2-1) (3-1)$$

$$(1) (2)$$

$$= 2$$

Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) critical table value at 0.05 is 9.925

### Decision rule

If the calculated  $X^2$  is greater than the critical value, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative and if the calculated  $X^2$  is less than the critical value the alternative hypothesis will be rejected and the null hypothesis accepted. From the table above,  $X^2=1140$  while the chi-square ( $x^2$ ) critical value at 0.05 is 9.925. This means that there is significant remedies to sit at home on small and medium scale enterprises in Abakaliki metropolis. This means that, there is significant remedies to sit at home on small and medium scale enterprises in Abakaliki metropolis.

### Conclusion

The study examined the effects of sit at home on small and medium scale businesses in Abakaliki metropolis. The study concluded that the IPOB's sit-at-home order had a damaging effect on the small and medium scale businesses of the Southeast region. The states and the zone are becoming poorer due to the observance of the Monday sit-at-home order. The Monday sit-at-home order issued by IPOB is a major risk to the small and medium scale businesses activities of the Southeast region of Nigeria. The Southeast region's economy, which is on the verge of collapse, will benefit greatly from the immediate termination of the sit-at-home edict.

### Recommendations

The study presents the following significant recommendations.

- The study recommends that government should come to terms of agreement with the IPOB hierarchy to restore sound business environment for expected level of growth of SMEs in the Southeast region.
- The study also recommends that Saturdays should be officially recognized as working days to compensate to some extent for the productive hours loss on Mondays.

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