

Effect of Mandatory Sit-at-Home Order by The Indigenous People of Biafra on the Socio-Economic Activities in South-Eastern Region, Nigeria

¹Egenti Tochukwu Fabian, ²Emmanuel NwekeOkafor

Siam University,
Thailand

¹*tochukwuegenti@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

The Purpose of this study is to enquire on the effect of the regular sit-at-home order mandated and enforced by the Indigenous People of Biafra on the residents of South Eastern Region of Nigeria. This study focuses on its socio-economic impact on the Region. The study took the form of a survey. It had 50-person population and used the census approach. The questionnaire was used as the source of data, while the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the Split-Half approach which yielded an undisputable result. The hypothesis test was conducted with a 5% level of significance. The analysis carried out was Regression Technique. A survey research design was used in the study. The questionnaire's validity was verified using the face and content approach. The data was also analyzed using mean for descriptive statistics and regression analysis for inferential statistics, with the hypothesis being evaluated at a significance level of 5%. The result reveal that socio-economic activities in South-Eastern Nigeria is rapidly declining, including travel restrictions and the sustainability of trade and other commercial operations in the region.

Keywords: IPOB (Independent People of Biafra) sit-at-Home, Socio-Economic activities, South Eastern Region Nigeria, Igbos & Businesses.

INTRODUCTION

The Indigenous People of Biafra's (IPOB) regular sit-at-home orders in South-Eastern Nigeria has attracted concerns both in the Diaspora and other parts of the country. Every inhabitant of the South-East region is feeling the wroth effects of the order which is consequentially disastrous both economically, socially and otherwise. People in the area are suffering more they could condone. More troubling is the awareness that the people of the Southeast are suffering because of the actions of their kits and kin. The IPOB leadership that initiated this order in loyalty and solidarity with their leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, had attempted to suspend it, but it persisted with more devastations due to the fear and trauma the order had created in the Region sequel to the killings and destructions of lives and property witnessed in its hay days.

Early in the year 2022, an order to quit the sit-at-home was issued from the leadership of the IPOB but was immediately countered and refuted by a faction in the Organization. This simply shows a clear power tussle in the IPOB leadership. This tussle in the IPOB leadership escalated the situation and kept the entire Region in disarray. From the researcher's elicitation, residents are crying not only because they were asked to sit at home against their will but, the tussle left



them uncertain of whose orders to follow. This careless Behaviour had claimed the lives of many families and destroyed property beyond imagination.

Many indigenes of the Region though sympathize with the IPOB's goal and Kanu's fate, but, the disruptive nature of the sit-at-home has forced them to have a rethink their stand. The situation has further deteriorated to the point where major Igbo leaders and elder statesmen have voiced their unhappiness with the IPOB's activities and threatened to withdraw their support and efforts towards the release of the IPOB leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu from detention. Other leaders and organizations have equally expressed dissatisfaction with the sit-at-home movement and its negative impact on the Indigenes of the Region.

Chief Mbazulike Amechi in his peace initiative, urged the Federal Government to engage the group in dialogue as a means of ending the agitation and conflict. The mainstream of the IPOB had called on governors in the South-East to deal aggressively with the hoodlums who still enforces the Monday sit-at-home. As the sit-at-home lingers, some merchants in Onitsha have estimated a loss of over N25 billion, in addition to the loss of lives, limbs, and property. They bemoaned the fact that their business counterparts, clients/customers were moving their operations to Lagos for fear of gunmen or the IPOB Attack. Igbo Business Forum had also advised the IPOB not to utilize the Biafra struggle to ruin the South-East economy.

Late Dr Chike Akunyili, the husband to the late former Director-General of National Agency for Food, Drugs and Administration Control (NAFDAC), was shot dead by unidentified gunmen during **sit-at-home enforcement**. The outcome of the investigation revealed that he is a victim of the circumstance of sit-at-home order enforcement by hoodlums in allegiance to the IPOB.

Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to investigate the impact of the mandated sit-at-home on the socio-economic well-being of people in the Southeastern region of Nigeria.

Research Question

- What is the benefit of Sit-at-home order to the people of South-Eastern Nigeria?
- To what extent has the sit-at-home affected lives and businesses in the Region?
- Has the sit-at-home order grown or dissuaded Commerce and Industries in the region?
- What are indigenous and residents' opinions of the order?

Research Limitations

- **Scope:** The study in its generality is hampered by the fact that it was limited to only Anambra state as against the entire South Eastern States proposed in the study.
- **Finance:** Unavailability of adequate funds hampered the locations supposedly to be covered. This is caused by no availability of subvented transport system in the region and high cost of transportation at present due to scarcity of Premium Motor Spirit in the Region and Nigeria as of date.
- **Time:** Time to a large extent contributed to the limitations that hampered the smooth success of the study. One of the researchers is an MAPD student and a working staff in



Nigerian law enforcement. Time constraints as a student and a working-class hampered the development of the work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Problems of Conception and Theory

South-east and their colossal enterprises in the country: South-Eastern people of Nigeria dominated by the Igbos, has a population of over 40 million people, accounting for about 24% of the country's total population. They are the country's third-largest ethnic group (Obunike, 2016). Igbo is the name of their native language. The South-Eastern States comprises Anambra State, Abia State, Imo State, Ebonyi State, and Enugu State. The Igbos have traditionally been known for their ability to establish communities through economic ventures. According to Chukwu (2015), the Igbos have exhibited a tremendous desire to build their society and economy on multiple occasions. Agriculture, non-agricultural production, and trade were the three primary areas of her economy. They were thought to have a higher literacy rate than other Nigerian tribes, which contributed to them having the majority of critical jobs in the Nigerian public service before the Nigerian Biafra war Revolution. The majority of them turned to buying and selling as a result of their losses during and after the war (Chukwu, 2015). Over the years, South Eastern people's contributions to the Nigerian economy, host states, and communities have sparked debate over their character and entrepreneurial drive. In light of this, Olanrewaju (1999) claims that the Igbo people, as compared to other main ethnic groups in Nigeria, dominate entrepreneurial activity, particularly in the fields of micro, small, and medium enterprises. In his study, South Eastern indigenous people are the Entrepreneur in the Political Economy of Nigeria. The resolve and perseverance with which they progressed over the years despite civil war trauma and unfavorable economic policies meted out to them distancing them from others.

Sustainable Business Concept

The term "sustainability" is derived from the word "survive," which is a subset of the word "sustain." To be sustained, therefore, is a wish to live. Sustainability in the business world refers to remaining relevant and competitive in an ever-changing corporate environment. As a result, businesses are said to be sustainable when they can weather shocks and turbulence common in the commercial world.

According to Ifekwem and Adedamola (2016), SMEs are feasible when they can overcome internal and external constraints. Similarly, Nidumolu, Pralahad, and Rangaswami (2009) believe that sustainability should be a key component of company strategy for overcoming a variety of operational issues. The vital role that SMEs play in creating jobs and contributing to GDP in many countries necessitates their long-term viability. The government on its own uses a variety of methods to assist and improve their chances of survival.

Governments, particularly in developing countries undertake attempts to assist the survival of SMEs through various measures according to Ifekwem and Adedamola (2016). However, the extent to which these measures have impacted SMEs' long-term viability is still unknown. However, the onslaught brought on by sit-at-home epidemic makes their survival even more difficult.



Restriction of movement order South-Eastern Nigeria

The restriction of mobility order, as it relates to the sit-at-home order, is a restriction of personal liberty. Regardless of your age, gender, or status, no one is exempt from the order. The restriction of this order include:

1. Opening of businesses, shops, markets, offices or any other commercial places
2. Restriction on mass the gathering of any type including places of worships and burials.
3. Restriction on travelers; both incoming and outgoing of people or vehicles in any state of the South Eastern Region of Nigeria.

It is important to note that all aforementioned orders are not enforced by the Agents of Government but rather by the security Department of Indigenous People of Biafra called Eastern Security Network (ESN).

Theoretical Framework

The research is based on David C. McClelland's 1961 Need for Achievement Theory. This is a motivational hypothesis based on the achievement, affiliation, and power trinity.

According to the thesis, each individual or civilization is driven by one of three basic motivations: success, affiliation, or power.

People develop these motivators by their lifestyles, not by nature. Achievers enjoy resolving issues and accomplishing objectives. According to Eboh (2002), the major thrust of the idea is that individuals or societies with a strong demand for achievement have an insatiable thirst for success and will go to any length to test their skills and engage in creative activities to obtain it. The South-Eastern people's thirst for success and problem-solving drive appears to be what drives them to start and run enterprises, and this is where the study and theory intersect. Their commercial empires are powered by the movement of products and services from one area to another. Something, the restriction of movement in sit-at-home orders appears to counteract. As a result, the study hypothesizes that: Movement restrictions have an impact on company/business viability in South-East Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study took the form of a survey. It had a 50-person population and used the census approach. The questionnaire was used as the source of data, while the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the Split-Half approach which yielded an indisputable result. The hypothesis test was conducted with a 5% level of significance. The analysis was carried out was Regression Technique. A survey research design was used in this study. The research was conducted in Anambra State, which is one of Nigeria's south-eastern states and the country's second-largest entrepreneur hub after Lagos. The questionnaire's validity was verified using the face and content approach. Its reliability was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test for internal consistency, which yielded an alpha level of 873 indicating good consistency. Data was gathered from five major markets in Anambra state (Onitsha Main Market, Building Materials International Market, New Motor Spare Parts Market, Ochanja Market and Iweka Electronics International Market). All of which are located in Onitsha, the state's commercial nerve center. Imported commodities from many parts of the world are sold in these markets, with China being the largest host country of import. A total of 50 importers were chosen randomly (ten from each of the markets). Because of their small numbers, the

entire population was investigated. Following that, 50 copies of the questionnaire were delivered to the selected dealers (importers), of which 46 were collected and used for the study. The data were analyzed using mean for descriptive statistics and regression analysis for inferential statistics, with the hypothesis being evaluated at a significance level of 5%.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Responses to the impact of no movement on sit-at-home order on the long-term viability of businesses.

S/N	Questionnaire items	Response keys					Mean
		SA (5)	A (4)	U (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	
	Restriction of movement items						
1	People still walk freely in South-East Nigeria even at sit-at-home	1	2	6	13	24	26.8
2	Compliance with Sit-at-home order is optional in South-East Nigeria	1	1	5	17	22	28.4
3	Businesses boom during sit-at-home	3	3	4	17	19	30.8
4	Shops don't open during sit-at-home	23	17	3	2	1	45.2
5	Transporting my goods to my warehouse is usually easy during sit-at-home	1	2	4	19	20	30
6	Goods stay longer in my shop due to incessant sit-at-home order by IPOB	23	17	4	1	1	45.2
	Suitability in Trade and Commerce in the Region						
7	I sell more goods during sit-at-home	1	2	3	14	26	25.2
8	I make more profit during sit-at-home	2	1	6	16	21	29.2
9	I can't easily pay my bills due to always sit at home order	24	15	3	2	2	44.4
10	Low turnout of customers during sit-at-home periods	27	12	3	3	1	45.2

RESULTS

The findings reveal that socio-economic activities in South-Eastern Nigeria are rapidly on a decline, including travel restrictions and the sustainability of trade and other commercial operations in the region.

Due to constraints and the fear of being assaulted, the coefficient determines a 96 per cent shift in the progress and sustainability of enterprises in the aforementioned location.

The responses of respondents on the impact of movement restrictions on the viability of enterprises in the examined area are represented in the table above. The table displays the frequencies of respondents who agreed or disagreed with each questionnaire item.

The data is analyzed using descriptive statistics with a threshold of acceptability of 30 or higher. This means that any questionnaire item with a mean of 30 or more should be recognized as true in the respondents' businesses, whilst those with a mean of less than 30 should be discarded. According to the results of the analysis, respondents rejected questionnaire items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7,

and 8 because their mean was less than 30, whereas questionnaire items 4,6,9 and 10 were accepted. After all, their mean was greater than 30. As a result, the respondents rejected the idea that people should be able to walk and work freely while at home.

Furthermore, the research demonstrates that companies are completely closed during the sit-at-home period resulting in a complete reduction in socioeconomic activity in Nigeria's South East Region. According to the results in the table above, the respondents believe that businesses are closing down in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria sequel to the mandated sit-at-home. They also agree that the region has a low-income population and a poor client base. In the same vein, they agree that restricting movement during sit-at-home days causes commodities to stay in their stores/warehouses for longer than usual. Respondents agree that prices of items are high because of the paucity of commodities during this period and that people are afraid to buy during this period. According to the study sustainability and survival of businesses is retrogressing. They claim that as a result of the IPOB's required sit-at-home directive, customers no longer buy in bulk. They further indicated that they are unable to pay some of their bills, employees' salaries and salespersons' wages. Most businesses operate at a loss due to sit-at-home and its execution by the Indigenous People of Biafra. All of these remarks suggest that the sit-at-home epidemic is having a negative influence on the respondents' businesses, reversing socio-economic growth and sustainability in the South-Eastern region of Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis: *Movement restrictions have an impact on the long-term viability of enterprises in South-East Nigeria.*

Table: 2 Summary of total regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Estimation Standard Error
1	.981	.969	.968		1.56

The effect of movement restrictions on the sustainability of enterprises in Nigeria's South Eastern region is seen in Table 2.

The results revealed a correlation between restriction of movement in the name of sit-at-home and business sustainability, with a correlation coefficient of 981, and a coefficient of determination of 968, indicating a 96 per cent change in the sustainability of residents-owned businesses is explained by changes in restriction of movement.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

South Eastern Governors in collaboration with the Nigerian Federal Government, should dialogue and negotiate with the proponents of the aforementioned sit-at-home in the South-eastern Region for the withdrawal of such disastrous order imminently, as such, this will create an opportunity for better understanding between both parties to create an atmosphere of peace and stability for a business-friendly environment in South-Eastern region of Nigeria. Shutting down or establishing a sit-at-home state in the Southeast would be destructive as well as dysfunctional. Peace is the greatest solution at this time. Dialogue remains the ultimate. It is pertinent to notify the leadership of the IPOB that before taking any action or launching any campaign that may cause hardship to the South Eastern nation, their leaders should examine

the socio-economic well-being of the people in the region. Allow media campaigns, diplomacy, and conversation to be used as alternatives to violence in realizing Biafra through properly mechanized agitation rather than killing and impoverishing its indigenes. On this note, a unison conclusion is established.

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