



## ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF IPOB SIT-AT-HOME ORDER IN SOUTHEAST, NIGERIA: INSIGHTS FROM NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER REPORTS

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### ABSTRACT

Restriction of movement has proven to have effects on the economy of the nation, especially one orchestrated by individuals and groups in the society that may have little or no significance in solving the immediate problem in the society. This study explained the economy effects (negative and positive) of the IPOB sit at home order in the south east geo-political zone of Nigeria with insights from national newspaper reports while relying on qualitative content analysis and framing theory to achieve the objectives of this study. Two national dailies were purposively selected, they include the Vanguard and the Guardian newspapers. Issues studied span from 1<sup>st</sup> May - 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2022. The publication of the study was 490 editions from where a sample of 98 was drawn using Nwanna(1981) sample formula. The researcher extracted the data from the online newspapers archives and used the data for discussion. The researcher's instrument of data collection was coding sheet and also the inter-coder reliability technique was used which showed an overall 85% perfect agreement. The researcher's unit of analysis entails, straight news stories, feature stories and opinion columns where the content categories of the study includes, the media, the story type and the frame. The findings revealed, that the selected newspapers did not give adequate coverage to the IPOB sit at home order in the south east Nigeria. Thus it was recommended that the newspapers should not only report on the IPOB activities but should also report deeply about the economic effects it has on the residents of the south east Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Economy, effect, IPOB sit-at-home Southeast, Nigeria, newspaper reports

### Introduction

As a sovereign nation, Nigeria has continued to face separatist agitations or struggles after the unsuccessful Biafran independence attempt of 1967–1970. 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. Massive underdevelopment and persistent youth unemployment distorted the political system and demographics of the Nigerian state, stifling economic development and bringing on Boko haram-related increases in poverty, hunger, insecurity, and instability (Osaretin, 2019, p.1). 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 speak out about the agitation, such as the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) (p.12), rather than inviting Biafrans to a round table for conversation.

The indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) campaign was started by certain south-eastern Nigerian's in retaliation for what they saw as manipulation, with the intention of breaking away from Nigeria and establishing an independent state. According to Okonkwo (nd), the group's aim is to right any wrongs and injustices the south east believes the Nigerian government has committed against them. More disruption has been caused in the area as a result of the detention of MaziNnamdiKanu, their principal leader. The eastern security network, sometimes known as ESN, and other groups emerged to support IPOB. The group's efforts have drawn considerable attention from the print and internet media. The media are directly accountable for teaching, informing, and enlightening society. One of their societal duties is to do this. Whether or not a crisis can be addressed greatly depends on how the media portrays it. In response to what they perceive to be manipulation in the south east, some south eastern Nigerians have started a campaign dubbed indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB), which aims to secede from Nigeria and create an independent nation, according to Okekeet al. (2019).

On the other hand, the organization has been declared illegal by the Nigerian government, which is run by PresidentMuhammadu Buhari. As a result of the group's operations, conflicts have regularly arisen between group members and security forces. Some regions of the nation have exchanged quit and counter-quit notices with one another in response to IPOB'S actions in the south east. One such instance that attracted a lot of media attention involved a visit from young people from the north to Igbo communities in the area. the majority of southern communities long for ethnic variety between the north and south eastern peoples, which has led to splinter groups within the south and south east calling for secession from the Nigeria state since northerners are thought to be superior to other ethnic groups in the nation. In times of conflict, such as religious, ethnic, or other types of conflict, the media is especially important for integrating all parts of a society (Alphonsus, et al., 2022). The purpose of the media is to promote peaceful coexistence. Asemah and Edogoh (2012) noted that in today's culture, the media largely offers a place for interest groups or resentful parties to voice their opinions on the matter at hand, potentially ensuring and providing every citizen with easy access to the media.

### **Statement of the Problem**

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 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.

Scholarly interest in how newspapers cover armed conflicts and secessionist agitations has persisted due to the fact that mass media tools are frequently the major sources of information on a specific conflict and that this information can affect how people perceive that conflict. Some of the first research in the field were pioneered by Fritze&Mathewson in 1957, who were among the first to do so. These studies demonstrate how inconsistent information and inaccuracies can be present in early-stage crisis coverage in the media, which can be fuzzy and disorganized. Upon reviewing the international media's coverage of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, a steering group came to the conclusion that it had provided insufficient and inaccurate information about the situation (Omenugha&Ukwueze, 2008).

The aforementioned observations make it very evident that media coverage of armed conflicts and agitation is anything from professional. This is because the way in which international disputes are portrayed in the media greatly affects how the general public views them, which in turn affects how the parties react and behave. Through their daily coverage, Nigerian newspapers have been crucial in presenting and explaining the indigenous peoples of Biafra (IPOB) agitations in south east Nigeria. It would be interesting to ascertain the caliber and volume of coverage given to IPOB'S operations by the Nigerian daily in order to assess if it served as an agent of escalation or de-escalation of the already severe situation through its coverage. And also, the big question is here, have IPOB actualized its aims of declaring the sit at homes order, have they really come to think how people loss their businesses day by day because of their orders. However, one could be right to perceive that the negative implication of the economic sit-at-home is far greater than the positive effects.

Now, the significant of this study is to scrutinize the economy effects (negative and positive) of the IPOB sit at home order in the southeast Nigeria through the lens of Nigeria newspaper reports.

### **Objective of This Study**

The main objective of this study is to understudy the economic effects of IPOB sit at home orders in south east Nigeria: insight from Nigerian newspaper records specific objectives of this study include:

1. To ascertain the frequency of coverage on IPOB sit at home issues.
2. To determine the story type used in reporting IPOB sit at home order by the selected newspapers.
3. To identify the frames used in reporting to IPOB sit at home issues by the selected newspapers.

### Research questions

1. What is the frequency of coverage given to IPOB sit at home order in the selected newspaper?
2. What are the story types used in reporting IPOB sit at home order in the selected newspaper?
3. What are the frames used in reporting IPOB sit at home issues?

### Literature review

Along with the numerous agitations in Nigeria, a number of secessionist movements have been reported in other regions of the world. According to Griffiths (2017), some of these have been observed in and are still being observed in Scotland, Catalonia, Iraqi Kurdistan, NewCaledonia, and Bougainville. These units have attempted to leave the nation in which they are now stationed on several occasions. Recent study by Griffiths &Wasserinon the secession movement from 1900 to 2006 indicates that "the strategic use of violence may increase a group's chance of gaining independence" (2018, p.1). The researchers compared the institutional and extra-institutional strategies used by separatist movements from 1946 to 2011 using the core data set. They discovered that secessionists have several institutional or legal avenues for independence that have an impact on their movements. They also learned that no separatist movement seeking independence from a neighboring state has ever been successful without adopting institutional approaches either alone or in conjunction with non-institutional approaches.

Sorens(2005) examined secession risk indicators at the sub-state and regional levels to determine which regions are more likely to support prosperous separatist parties. According to the study, secessionism is linked to particular elements that distinguish it from other types of ethnic strife. Secession is facilitated by a variety of circumstances, including language, a lack of irredentist potential, relative wealth, geographic non-contiguity, population, and a multiparty political system. Despite the fact that there are significant cases of non-ethnic secessionism; these factors are more often used to activate ethnic identity rather than to replace it. Sorens, (2005) asserts that ethnicity is a key factor in secession. Ethnicity and trust, according to Criado, Herreros, miller &Ubeda, (2018), are components that fuel separatist movements. They suggested that political rivalry would increase ethnic saliency, which would subsequently activate or deepen in-group trust while decrementing trust in people from other ethnic groups. Researchers from Spain's Catalonia studied the pre- and post-secession periods and found that ethnicity fosters trust between groups while the contrary could lead to secession movements.

Furthermore, still accentuating ethnicity, Hentschel, (2018) stated that ethnic groups' ambition to rise above adopted national policies that demean them is one of the core causes of secession movement. Because of this, ethnic groups use secession to reduce the expense of ethnic heterogeneity and then implement their own policies. The researcher discovered that more secession will almost probably result from more secessionist wars as separating units will try to split from the entire. Sari,(2018) investigated secession from a religious perspective, focusing on Indonesia's role in Muslim-related secessions in non-Muslim nations. The study discovered that key policymakers' perceptions that support or non-support can affect national interests influence how the Indonesian government views Muslim separatists and their host countries. As a result, support for secessionists is based on national interests rather than affiliations. The task of informing, educating, entertaining, and

influencing public issues falls to the world's mass media. Newspapers unquestionably play a significant part in the advancement of human rights, and Asemah(2011, p. 39) concurred that the media, in his view, are agents of social change.

The media is therefore seen as a force for social and political change. They serve as protectors and a mirror for society's members to view their own behavior (Lippmann, 1922). This means that how the media cover a topic determines how important that topic is to society. Smosand the media have a skewed relationship, with the media frequently distorting movement messages the mass media's preference for catchy headlines, which encourages protesters' deviant behavior, is an example of this asymmetrical dependency. Because of this, the message of Smos frequently gets lost in the media's focus on sensational outbursts (Cissel, 2012; kutz-Flamenbaum, Staggenborg, & Duncan, 2012). Negative frames cannot and do not sell movements because they erode public support, but positive frames cannot and do not erode public support and do not sell movements. In 2019, Balalooked into how the bring our girls campaign was covered by major newspapers in Nigeria. The conclusions showed that every piece of content that was examined was negative. Normally, one would anticipate the media too adequately and in-depth cover sensitive topics like the, bring back our girls campaign. Such issues can only be solved in this way. In a study by Egbunike, (2015) to compare how old and new media framed the #occupy Nigeriamovement; it was found that traditional media gave problems like protest more representation. The three collective action frame building tasks propositions of the framing theory: motivation, diagnosis, and prognosis were used in the content analysis of the samples. The results showed that in framing the motivation, diagnosis, and prognosis of the protest, newspapers were superior to social media. Additionally, it demonstrated how the press covered the protest in more detail.

Samuel (2016) and Obaje, (2017) evaluate media coverage of Boko haram and find that straight news predominated and that the articles' contents were very inflammatory in terms of the assaults, targets, and effects. Sabo & Salisu, (2017) did a photographic assessment of the same group's actions as depicted in the media and uncovered dreadful elements that typified the majority of the photos (61.4%), which suggest genocide and religious jihad. this chemical is also quite inflammatory. seeing sights like this can instill fear and aggressiveness in people. the situation may grow or deescalate depending on how the media presents the outcomes of agitation. in conclusion, by its reporting, the media has the ability to both begin and influence the resolution of agitations.

In their discourse on Boko haram's operations as reported on and/or framed in the YouTube webcast channels of cable network news (CNN), Aljazeera, and channels television, ChiomaandOjomo(2015) found high professionalism and a critical perspective. It should be noted that the majority of these channels were foreign, suggesting that specific national concerns are influencing the inflammatory nature of the sect's coverage in Nigerian media.

Similar findings were made by Duruji, (2009), Ibeano, Orji, and Iwuamadi (2016), who found that the media's portrayals of Massob's activities are mostly framed in lies, propaganda, and polarization. The majority of the issues are not explored due to political and ethnic interests, and the group's actual activities are inaccurately reported. Mustapha (2022), investigated how the IPOBactivities in the south east Nigerian were covered in Nigerian newspapers. According to

Thompson (2007), the media is a powerful tool when used by those whose intent is to instigate conflict." any effort, whether it be human, financial, or political, will be made by combatants in a local or global conflict to define or shape media content. The IPOB movement, which supports the creation of a separate country called Biafra, is a sensitive subject that the media must handle with caution. This study revealed that the guardian newspaper reported more on the IPOB activities than the *Daily Sun* publication; it also revealed that all the content analyzed were reported negatively. The newspapers selected were the guardian and daily sun.

### **Theoretical framework**

In this study, the framing theory was employed. Similar to the agenda-setting tradition, framing broadens the research's reach by concentrating on the core problems at hand rather than a specific topic. According to framing theory, the media pay attention to specific occurrences and then contextualize them. Erving Goffman resurrected the idea and theory of framing for sociology in 1974. The sociological perspective was revitalized, and it is now used in communication studies. The notion holds that the media selects the themes, decides what the public thinks about them, and focuses attention to particular issues. The first "idea" for creating the agenda was this. Consequently, a frame explains how the media and media gatekeepers organize and portray the events and issues they cover, as well as how audiences interpret the information they are provided (Asemah, 2011). According to framing theory and the notion of framing bias, the way something is presented (the frame) affects people's decisions. Even in and of itself, communication has a framework. A research by Morano, (2010), Fidas,(2008), and Norris (2003) demonstrates how the media use diverse frames to satisfy a variety of audience goals. A significant difference was found between the media's coverage of the Afghanistan war on CNN and Al-Jazeera, according to a comparative research done by Jaspersonet al. in 2003.

A message, an audience, a messenger, a medium, pictures, a setting, and, most crucially, higher-level moral and conceptual frames are all included in the communication frame. Of course language matters, but it matters because it conjures up moral and mental frames. According to Baran&Davis (2009, p. 35), the framing theory examines how people utilize expectations to make meaning of their everyday lives. Investigating media coverage of climate change in Peru, Okeke, Okumba, Ezeah&Gever(2019), citing Baran&Davis (2009) and Takahashi (2011), found that the sources the media mentioned were primarily government-related, leaving little to no opportunity for common people's perspectives. According to Hallin, Manoff, and Weddle (1993), reliance on official sources in the context of national security matters is "one of the most consistently duplicated findings in American journalism. The major takeaway is that the media source should be taken into account when studying conflict framing in the media. How the media portrays the causes and resolutions of such conflicts is another critical component of media conflict framing. There are both long-term and short-term factors for every conflict. There is also the issue of trying to resolve a quarrel like this. According to Vladisavljevi, (2015), the reasons for war and the factors that lead to warfare are given much less time and space in media coverage. The audience's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors might be affected by this field of meaning by attaching a particular meaning or interpretation to a particular situation. This theory was chosen for this study because, if IPOB actions are presented in the media,

particularly newspapers, in a favorable light, they will attract public attention and, as a result, lead to the resolution of the problems that gave rise to the activities.

### **Research Methodology**

The qualitative content analysis method was used in this study. According to Pavelko and Grabe, (2017) “content analysis is a systematic research method that provides researchers with the capability to detect patterns in media content that are often not detectable through unsystematic observation.”

### **Population of the Study/ Sample Size**

As a result, the population of this study included all of the national dailies published in Nigeria as indicated on the website of 4international media and newspaper ([www.4imn.com/ng/](http://www.4imn.com/ng/)), a total of 28 national daily. Two newspapers out of a total of 28 leading national dailies were selected using the purposive sampling technique. These newspapers include *vanguard* and *the guardian* newspapers. The reason for choosing these national dailies is because they have wider circulation in eastern part of the country. Obayi et al (2016) added.

Hence, 98 issues out of the total number of 490 issues published by the two selected newspapers throughout the research period (1<sup>st</sup> of May 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2022) formed the sample size for this study. That is 245 issues for each of the newspapers. This period was chosen for this study because it is when the issues of IPOB sit at home was trending. Nwanna (1981) sample formula was used to arrive at the sample size. An expected frequency value of 20% was used in sample size calculation as the population value was below a thousand. The formula states:

$$n = \frac{nv}{p}$$

$$100$$

Where:

**n** = sample size

**nv** = population value

**p** = expected frequency value

The population value for the three newspapers is 490 editions.

$$\text{Thus: } n = \frac{490}{20}$$

$$100$$

$$n = 98$$

The sample size is 98.

### **Unit of Analysis**

According to Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhaeafu and Okpanachi (2012), “unit of analysis is the smallest element in content analysis”. Unit of analysis consists of those variables that a researcher would actually look at in the course of the analysis. Hence, the study’s unit of analysis entails the straight news stories, feature stories, and opinion columns.

Reliability according to Wimmer & Dominick (2011, p. 171) refers to the level of agreement among independent coders who code the same content using the same coding instrument. To prove

the reliability of this work, the inter-coder reliability technique was used. The entries coded were subjected to Holsti's formula as cited in Wimmer & Dominick (2011, p. 172).

$$\text{Inter-coder reliability} = \frac{2m}{n_1 + n_2}$$

Where:

m = the total number of coding decisions which two coders agree

n<sub>1</sub> = the number of coding decisions by the first coder

n<sub>2</sub> = the number of coding decisions by the second coder

A sub-sample of 10 percent as suggested by Lacy and Riffle (1996) was selected which yielded a sub-sample of sixteen editions.

$$\text{E.g. } 98/100 = 0.98$$

$$\text{Therefore, } 0.98 \times 10 = 9.8$$

For coder 1, total number of coding decisions=40

For coder 2, total number of coding decisions=40

Number of coding decisions where coder 1 and coder 2 agree=33

$$\text{Inter-coder reliability} = \frac{2(33)}{40 + 40} = \frac{66}{80} = 0.825$$

$$\text{Therefore, } 0.825 \times 100 = 82.5\%$$

This means that the coefficient inter-coder reliability is 82.5% reliable.

According to Asemahet al. (2012, p. 205), "validity refers to the accuracy or truthfulness of a measurement; the extent to which measurements are useful in making decisions relevant on a given purpose." validity is not established by assertion but by evidence. However, validity refers to the accuracy or truthfulness of a measurement; it is looked upon as the appropriateness, significance and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores or data collected.

### **Instrument of data collection**

The instrument used for collecting data for the purpose of this research is the code sheet. Coding is the assignment of numbers of content categories "no matter what research methodology may be used" as Sobowale (1983, p. 53) in Nwodo (2006, p. 88) observes "coding remains an essential ingredient for processing the data collected" it is made for easy qualification, subsequent measurability and analysis of highly qualitative data. The code sheet explains the content categories that guide the researcher in collecting data for the study.



**Content Categories:**

**Category a: media**

1. *Thevanguard*
2. *The guardian*

**Category b: story type:**

- 1 – Straight news
- 2 – Features news
- 3 – Opinion columns

**Category c: frames:**

- 1 – Political frame
- 2 – Human interest frame
- 3 – Action frame
- 4 – Economic consequences

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

Data collected using code sheet were presented and analyzed. The contents of *vanguard* and the *guardian* were analyzed using schedules that grouped them into content categories. Tables were used to interpret data collected. The justification for the use of tables is to ensure clarity and simplicity.

There were 46 stories on the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) in the 98 editions. The number of stories was lesser than the number of editions studied (98) because no stories were reported on some days about the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB). Also in the 46 stories gathered, only 9 stories were been reported about the economic effects the sit at home order has on the south east Nigeria.

**Research question 1**

What is the frequency of coverage given to IPOB sit at home order in the selected newspaper?

**Table 1, Extent of coverage**

| <b>Newspapers</b> | <b>No. Of stories</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Vanguard</i>   | 25(54)                |

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Guardian</i> | 21(46)         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>46(100)</b> |

From the table above, it is clear that the *vanguard* newspaper gave more coverage to the IPOB activities than the *guardian*. out of the 46 stories gathered, 25(54) % were gathered from *vanguard* newspaper. While 21(46) % issues were gathered from *guardian* newspaper.

### Research question 2

What are the story types used in reporting IPOB sit at home order in the selected newspaper?

**Table 2, Story type**

| Story type     | <i>Vanguard</i> | <i>Guardian</i> | Total / percentage |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Straight news  | 22(88)          | 11(52)          | 33(72)             |
| Feature news   | 3(12)           | 2(10)           | 5(11)              |
| Opinion column | 0(0)            | 8(38)           | 8(17)              |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>25(100)</b>  | <b>21(100)</b>  | <b>46(100)</b>     |

According to the table above, the selected newspapers used more straight news to report IPOB activities. Also, some of the stories were feature stories and few opinion stories. Furthermore, no opinion column stories were reported on *vanguard* newspaper.

### Research question 3

What are the frames used in reporting IPOB sit at home issues in the south east Nigeria .

**Table 3, Frames**

| Frames               | <i>Vanguard</i> | <i>Guardian</i> | Percentage     |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Political frame      | 12(48)          | 15(71)          | 27(58)         |
| Action frame         | 5(20)           | 0(0)            | 5(11)          |
| Human interest frame | 2(8)            | 2(10)           | 4(9)           |
| Economic frame       | 6(24)           | 4(19)           | 10(22)         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>25(100)</b>  | <b>21(100)</b>  | <b>46(100)</b> |

Most of the stories were reported using political frame as shown in the table above, the *guardian* covered most stories using political frame than the *guardian* newspaper. Also *vanguard*

newspaper reported most stories of the IPOB issues using action frame than the *guardian* newspaper. They both newspapers reported same number of issues using human interest frame and also *vanguard* newspaper covered more stories on the IPOB issues than the *guardian* newspaper.

### **Findings**

The findings revealed the following:

- The selected newspapers (the *vanguard* and the *guardian*) did not give adequate coverage to the activities of the IPOB in the south east Nigeria.
- The selected newspapers reported little about the economic effects IPOB sit at home order on the south east Nigeria.
- The findings, also shows that out of the 98 editions, only 46 issues were been reported about the IPOB activities (irrespective of the selected days).
- Also out of the 46 stories that were reported about the IPOB activities, only 9 stories were reported about the economic effects of the IPOB sit at home order on the residents of the south east Nigeria.
- It also revealed that the 9 stories that were reported about the economic effects of IPOB sit at home order has only negative effects on the people such as (children not been able to go to school, businesses crumbling, transport agencies not operating on Mondays, investors or revelers not been able to come into the south east for any kind of businesses etc.).

### **Conclusion/ Recommendation**

The IPOB sit at home order, which began on august 9, 2021 and continue till this day, is the outcome of Biafra's demand for freedom / independence. According to this study, the Monday sit at home order, in the south east has cost the country billions of naira. it has also affected people's , daily income earners who rely and survive on what they earn daily , businesses ( market places, transport agencies, corporate, institutions among others) and innocent people are being killed. this study also shows that the newspapers (the *vanguard* and the *guardian*) did not give adequate coverages to the activities of the IPOB and also the sit at home order and the effects it has on the residents of the south east Nigeria. The following recommendations are hereby given:

- Newspapers should make every effort to report more about the IPOB activities as well as the economic effect the sit at home has on the people.
- Newspaper should try to reports on the effects of the sit at home so as to let the government know or see how it is affects the people and take action.
- The federal government should not only read the newspapers and issues on IPOB they should take actions to help curb the sit at home order.

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