

THE EFFECT OF MONDAY SIT-AT-HOME AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN THE SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The environment in which any business operates is a very critical factor in determining its success as well as the overall economic impact it makes on the state. Investors want to establish their investment in environments that are peaceful, progressive and such that can enable them to carry out their business activities without the risks associated with economic instability, uncertainty of business environment, insecurity, etc. One of the most contemporary issues affecting the ease of doing business in the South-East is the weekly Monday Sit-at-Home and other associated Sit-at-Home orders declared by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) since August 9, 2021. While other regions of the country observe normal economic activities every week unhindered, the same does not apply to the South-East. Criminal elements within the zone have hijacked this process thereby using it to perpetrate all manner of crimes that create tensions and an unfriendly business atmosphere in the name of Unknown Gunmen. This study examined the effect of the Monday Sit-At-Home on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in South-East, Nigeria. It adopted the Rational Choice theory to establish how the economic environment especially the security situation in the South-East determines the choice of investors towards the zone. The qualitative research approach adopted entails the use of a secondary source of data and a Key Informant Interview (KII) for data collection; an explanatory method of data analysis was used to analyse data collected. The result of the study revealed that the sit-at-home fuels insecurity in the South East as a result of the incessant attacks by unknown gunmen. This has affected the ease of doing business in the region and has scared away foreign investors who are now relocating their business from the region; leading to loss of income and poor economic development of the region. The study recommended that government should be more pragmatic and strategic in the use of dialogue to release the IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu, address the sociopolitical issues that led to the sit-at-home and provide a business framework that will address setbacks encountered by foreign investors in the zone.

Keywords: Sit-at-Home, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), South-East, Unknown Gunmen, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

Introduction

It is about three years now (since 2021) when Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), in the South-East introduced a weekly Monday sit-at-home in the zone. It was designed to protest the continued detention of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu by the Nigeria Security Operatives. As a developing economy it has a great implication on the socio-economic activities in the zone. The IPOB is a separatist organization in Nigeria whose aim is to restore an independent state of Biafra in the Old Eastern Region of Nigeria, comprising mainly today's South-East, some part of South-South Regions, and parts of the Middle Belt states of Nigeria such as Benue State and Kogi State (Aytogo, 2021).

However, the South-East is made up of five states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo). The southeast is so significant to national development in the sense that cities such as Aba in Abia state, Nnewi and Onitsha in Anambra state have emerged as manufacturing and commercial hubs, with the ability to export to other African countries. Manufacturing makes up 31% and 30% of businesses in Onitsha and Aba (Emeruwa, 2021, Ogba, Akogwu & Eze, 2023). The unfolding threat to businesses in the South-East poses a serious threat to economic development and social stability not only of the zone but the entire nation. Since 2021, the relatively calm region has taken a violent twist with frequent clashes between government forces and pro-Biafra supporters. The declaration of Monday sit-at-home has further compounded the threat to business activities in the South-East.

While other regions of the country observe its normal commercial and economic activities every week uninterrupted, the same is not applicable to the South-East. The sit-at-home has led to the closure of banks, markets, schools, industries, roads and offices on a weekly basis. Roads are deserted as residents observe the exercise in fear; many businesses have been attacked by unknown gunmen suspected to be enforcing the sit-at-home order

(PunchNews 13th July, 2023). This has literally grounded human, economic, and commercial activities in the region. Revenues running into trillions of naira have reportedly been loss since the exercise began (Azeez, 2022; ICIR 2023). The trade and commerce sector is the worst hit as various investors have apparently exited their business operations in the region owing to the deteriorating security and crippling business activities accompanied by the sit-at-home order. This worrisome development has posed serious threat on the economic development of a region which largely depends on trade and commerce for its revenue.

Government has however made concerted efforts to combat insecurity and IPOB sit-at-home in the South-East so as to improve the ease of doing business in the region. Apart from the federal government's use of armed forces, various governors of the region such as former governor of Ebonyi, Engr. Dave Umahi of Ebonyi State, Prof Charles Soludo of Anambra state and Barr Peter Mba of Enugu state have at one point or the other issued directives against civil servants' and traders' compliance to the sit at home order. The Ebonyi and Imo state governments launched Ebubeagu security outfit, while Anambra state government established Anambra Vigilante Service (AVG) to curtail activities of the unknown gunmen and the enforcement of the Monday sit-at-home in their various states. Likewise, the Ebonyi and Enugu state governors threatened to dismiss any civil servant who fail to attend work on Mondays and to lock the shops of any trader who fails to show up for his business activities on Monday (Punch Newspaper, 13th July, 2023). Despite these efforts, the Monday sit at home and underlying security threat still persist.

Amidst government's effort to make the region safe and secure, insecurity has continued unabated in the region. The government's security effort could not yield any positive result in maintaining peace and security in the region. Criminal gangs have consistently engaged in kidnapping, killings, closure and destruction of schools and business premises, and obstructing movements in the name of enforcing Monday-Sit-at-home. The unknown gunmen often target security personnel at their stations or checkpoints; personnel are killed, and their vehicles and duty posts were burnt. More than 10 police stations were attacked in parts of the South-East in the first five months of 2021, with many police officers killed (Esho, 2022). In some cases, police stations and other government facilities such as the offices of the Independent National Electoral Commission, prisons and courts are attacked and burnt while weapons are stolen.

In essence, one of the economic areas heavily affected by the sit-at-home order is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Olasehinde, 2022). Foreign Direct Investment is a business outfit, investment in a production firm or any other business in a country by an individual or organization of another country, either by acquiring a company in the target country or by expanding existing business operations in that country (Ayoola, 2022). Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays a vital role in economic development especially the emerging markets (Bakare, 2010). This is reflected on the fact that FDI provides capital to finance domestic projects, technology transfer, transfer of knowledge through expatriates, provision of jobs and new goods, etc. which promote economic growth. Ajayi (2016), avers that FDI is a driver of development; hence, it provides needed cash for investment, increases competitiveness in host-country's businesses, and aids local firms in becoming more profitable by obtaining more product innovation or investing in both human and physical capital.

Though, factors such as economic policy can affect the effectiveness of FDI; but the most significant factor is the business environment. In other words, the environment in which a business operates is a major determinant of its success or failure. Investors seek to set up business in a safe, secure and progressive environment where they will do business without the dangers of violence or insecurity (World Bank, 2015). Hence, the economic and political structures of the business environment need to be convincing enough to attract meaningful Foreign Direct Investment into such a region. The success of economic structure of a society centres on how viable and safe an environment is. Consequently, apart from the slowdown in investment flow, multinational firms are making their exit from Nigeria over an uncondusive business environment. For instance, in the first quarter of the year 2022, data from the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission showed that Nigeria is losing its attraction to foreign direct investment investors (NIPC, 2022).

By implication, economic growth is hampered by the sit-at-home order. It is obstructing the business activities of the FDI in the five states and pushing some of them to close or relocate out of the zone (Azeez, 2022). This adds to the unemployment rate, hunger, social crisis and the loss of internally generated revenue for state governments. Hence, there is a decline in business performance as well as increased investors' apathy, resulting in a low inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Some foreign firms with operational offices in the South-East have announced their exit including Shoprite, PZ Cussion, Unilever, Tiger brand and Total Energies (Onudu, 2023). Their exit is however linked to an uncondusive business environment orchestrated by insecurity associated with the sit-at-home. It is against this backdrop that this study tends to examine the effect of the Monday Sit-At-Home on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the South-East, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

The South-East and the Sit-at-Home Order

Nigeria has continued to face separatist agitations or struggles after the Nigerian-Biafran civil war of 1967–1970. The indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Biafran Zionist Movement, Boko Haram Islamic State Movement (BKISM), Odua People's Congress (OPC), Middle Belt Front (MBF), the Niger-Delta Avengers (NDA), etc. are some of Nigeria's well-known separatist and sectarian organizations that their activities have challenged Nigeria's socio-economic and political stability (Aja, 2021). Many scholarly views have suggested that these agitations are a logical outcome of poor governance, massive underdevelopment, persistent youth unemployment, increased poverty, hunger, and political instability (Osaretin, 2019). Perceptions of marginalisation, structural violence, and lack of inclusion form part of the basis for self-determination calls in the South-East. For example, after the Biafran Civil War, the post-conflict stabilisation strategy tagged "Reintegration, Reconstruction and Reconciliation (RRR) failed to achieve positive outcomes as Biafran sentiments and ambitions are still topical issues more than five decades after the war ended (Egobueze & Ojirika, 2017). The deliberate non-inclusion of the people of the south-east in most strategic positions at the national level breeds the feelings of social neglect, economic and political exclusion. According to Eze (2019), since the Nigerian civil war, also known as the Biafran war ended in 1970, pain, losses, and regrets have persisted in the thoughts of those who fought Biafran war. Though it was anticipated that the open wounds of the Biafran struggle would have closed up after over fifty years the war ended

According to Esho (2022), IPOB was formed in 2012 by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu over perceived excessive wield and abuse of power by the Nigerian state and marginalization of the Igbo nation. Consequently, the quest for independence of the Biafrans (Igbos) from Nigerian became a concern to them as the best to attain development of the region. One of the strategies adopted to gain their quest for freedom was media attacks on the Nigerian government by the IPOB (Emeruwa, 2021). The major intention of the IPOB campaign is to right wrongs and injustices which the South-East believes that the Nigerian government has committed against them and break away from Nigeria (Esho, 2022). In view of this, the Nigerian government deemed the media attacks as a breach to national peaceful coexistence and swiftly responded (Ugwu, 2022). Consequently, on 19th of October 2015, Nnamdi Kanu was arrested through concerted efforts from security operatives, thereafter charged for sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony (Emeruwa, 2021). The arrest birthed a number of agitations and social unrests across major cities in the Eastern part of Nigeria. For example, on the 2nd of December 2015 major cities in Anambra state especially in Onitsha, Abia state like Aba, Umuahia, and Enugu state recorded high rate of protests, riots, and police clashes. The experiences led to the death and injury of many youths (Aytogo, 2021). Following series of events by the Nigerian security operatives such as the proscription of the IPOB and the use of military operation against the agitators among which is the 'Operation Python Dance' Nnamdi Kanu left Nigeria to the UK few months after being released on bail, on the ground that his life was threatened (Ugwu, 2022). In the UK, he engaged social media platforms to attack the Nigerian government under the leadership of President Muhammad Buhari. The situation of things worsened, that in June 2021, Kanu was arrested by the Nigerian government in Kenya and brought back to the country (Emeruwa, 2021). He was re-arrested on charges of treasonable felony over his agitation for the independence of Republic of Biafra. On July 30th, 2021, Emma Powerful, the IPOB spokesperson declared that every Monday starting from August 9, 2021 would be a sit-at-home, although the orders were annually observed prior to this time to remember those who lost their lives in the Nigeria-Biafra war (Esho, 2022). This order would be a form of protest that would continue till Nnamdi Kanu is released from the custody of the Department of State Security.

Since then, the Southeastern part of Nigeria has observed several sit-at-home orders as a way of protest for the release of Nnamdi Kanu (Aytogo, 2021). The sit-at-home orders are observed on Mondays and other days of the week that Nnamdi Kanu is to appear before the court. Economic activities are halted on days the orders are to be observed, as no one is allowed to carry any transaction intra and inter states. Anyone found to flout the orders is either killed, kidnapped or attacked (Ugwu, 2022). The sit-at-home orders are observed in the five states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo) in the Southeastern part of Nigeria, some states in the South-South (Delta, Rivers) and some states in the North Central such as Benue and Kogi States (Aytogo, 2021, Ugwu, 2022).

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) according to the World Bank (2015) is investment that is made to acquire a lasting management interest (usually 10% of voting stock) in an enterprise or business that is operating in a country that is not of the investors. It is a company from one country making physical investment into building a production or business outlet in another country (Graham & Spaulding, 1995). It also involves construction of facilities or investment in a joint venture with a local firm by a foreign firm. Adeleke, Olowe and Fasesin (2014) and Bakare, (2010) explained it as a direct investment into production or business ventures in a country by an

individual or company of another country, either by acquiring a company in the target country or by expanding existing business operations in that country. It has been argued to be a veritable instrument of development. The contribution of FDI to development is the reasons why developing countries placed great importance in attracting investors to help develop different sectors of their economies. FDI's assist in economic growth by providing local economy with sources of foreign skills, resources, technologies, management expertise and human resource development through international training and collaboration (Onu, 2012, World Bank, 2007, Alfaro, 2016). According to Otepolo (2012), FDI serves as an important source of external resource flows to developing countries and has become a significant part of their capital formation.

Security, economic stability, friendly economic policies, availability of market are some of the factors that determine FDI inflows into any state. The potential flow of FDI depends strictly on the circumstances in the recipient country. A location that possesses an optimal security level can be said to be an attractive destination for FDI; on the other hand, an environment without adequate security scares investors just like the case of South-East Nigeria.

Sit-at-home and Foreign Direct Investment in South-East Nigeria

Study by Alfaro (2016) revealed that restrictions of people's movement cripple economic activities especially countries with low economic growth. The observance of Sit-at-Home order has become a recurring thing such that there is virtually none movement of persons and goods on the specified days which puts productive assets and resources on hold (Okeoma, 2021). For instance, Onitsha has the largest market in the whole of Africa, Nnewi and Aba are the hubs of manufacturing in Nigeria. The impact of the close down of businesses every Monday has reduced number of days for business activities to 5 days against 6days in every other region of the country. Odili (2021) remarked that the sit-at-home order has caused the economy of the South-East a massive decline in GDP relative to other geopolitical zones in the country. Also, Azeez (2022) quoted Simon Ekpa that the sit-at-home order has made Nigeria governments lose estimated revenue worth more than ₦1 billion on weekly basis.

The growth of the economy of Southeastern Nigeria largely depends on the accelerating and stimulating strength of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) (Odili, 2021). The influx of FDI to any region has similar economic outcome such as a boost in transfer of technology, domestic production, financial capital development, job creation and economic growth among others (Bitar, Hamadeh, and Khoueiri, 2019). Despite the relevance of FDIs to the economy of South-East, the sit-at-home order has impeded the flow FDIs to the region. As emphasized by the US Department of State (2020), the problem of insecurity threatens investors' resolve to make investment decisions in Nigeria. The restriction of movement on Mondays has added to the list of security challenges bedeviling Nigeria. FDI is not attracted to business environments characterized by alarming rate of uncertainties, insecurity and other setbacks to business profitability hence the sit-at-home order is not a promoter of FDI in the eastern region of the country (Alfaro, 2016). By implication, the sit-at-home order stifles FDIs, affects businesses and tourism. In recent times the governors of the region especially Anambra, Enugu and Abia states have made calculated efforts to attract foreign investors and Igbos in diaspora to invest in the zone. This effort has not shown any positive results as result of lack of trust by the investors on the viability of the region to business profitability due to the situation of sit-at-home and other associated security challenges.

According to findings by Odili (2021), no investor would be proud to invest in any business environments where confidence of investment protection is grossly low. A careful examination of myriads of outcomes and tensions associated with the sit-at-home orders, foreign investors would undoubtedly be afraid to invest in such volatile business environment. Onyebuchi (2018) concord to the above view when he submitted that due to social unrests in Nigeria, greater number of foreign investors have left Nigeria for other nations with stable business environment. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report cited in Onyebuchi (2018) established that from 2007-2009, Nigeria is among the 40 most viable and attractive economies for FDI, albeit series of social unrests in the country has changed the trajectory. The 2018 UNCTAD report revealed that Nigeria's FDI inflow declined by 21% while capital flight trended up by 8% (Dajo & Akor, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Rational Choice theory is used to explain the nexus between sit-at-home and foreign direct investment in South-East Nigeria. The theory can be traced back to a political philosopher and economist Adam Smith; however, Anthony Downs (1957) contributed extensively to the strength of theory. Rational choice theory postulates that individuals use rational calculations to make choices and achieve outcomes that are aligned with their own personal objectives and interest. Hence, maximizing an individual's self-interest is one of the main ideas behind the rational choice theory. In other words, every choice that is made by individuals is guided by first the costs, risks and benefits of making that decision.

In a nutshell, the following are the assumptions of rational choice theory.

1. All actions and decisions are rational and are made considering the costs and rewards that follows thereafter.
2. The reward of a relationship or action must outweigh the cost for the action to be completed.
3. When the value of the reward is below the costs, actions, decisions and relationship ends.
4. Individuals will use the resources at their disposal to optimize their rewards.

In relation to the present study, the theory gives clear understanding why and how investors will avoid investment when perceived that risk outweighs benefit in a given investment or business environment. Every business activity is driven by interest, choice as well as the reward for an action. Hence, individuals use their self-interests to make choices that will give them the highest benefit. The rational choice of every investor is guided by the cost of doing business, the risks and the benefit accruable from the business. Rational choice evaluates risk and rewards before undertaking action with intention to minimise or avoid risk and increase reward.

An investor would want an environment where there would be no risk factor; an environment that would enhance his business and enable him to maximize profit. Once an environment has element of risk factors such as the sit-at-home and associated security challenges investors will avoid such environment. Southeast Nigeria has recently been made uncondusive for investment through the weekly sit-at-home and attacks by unknown gunmen. These activities reduce days of business, scares customers and divert them to other friendly business environment, due to exposure of personnel, client and customers, and facilities to attack. Hence, this theory establishes that investments by foreign direct investors is as a result of rationale choice; where more business will be secured and where they can make more profit and returns on investment. Therefore, the sit-at-home order in the South-East has undermined this; leading to the choice of leaving to a better business environment.

Sit-at-Home Activities and Growth of Foreign Direct Investment in the South-East Nigeria

Sit-at-home has affected business including FDIs in the South-East in many ways. This has led to: **Foreign Businesses Shutting Down and Exiting the Zone**

The sit-at-home order accompanied by the activities of the unknown gunmen has disrupted the effectiveness of business activities in the South-East Zone. The unknown gunmen have attacked several local and foreign businesses operating in the region especially on days declared as sit-at-home. Sometimes, any business that opens or transporters operating on sit-at-home days are attacked. This has led to destruction of lives and properties in the region; creating security worries, fear and tension. Few reports from several attacks are captured in the pictures below:



On August 17, 2021, *Reuters* reported that the "unknown gunmen" attacked a convoy transporting employees and a contractor of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) to its Assa North Gas development project in Ohaji, Imo State. The assault resulted in the death of one police officer and six company personnel (Crises24, 28th September, 2021). The information further confirmed that Shell has shut down the project site. In another development, according to report by Politics Nigeria, on 10th January 2021, ShopRite in Enugu and other business establishments were attacked. Perhaps, this is one of the incidents that led to the swift shutdown of the ShopRite Enugu.

A member of staff of Shoprite Enugu was interview on what is their greatest challenge in doing business in the South-East?

Our greatest challenge doing business here in the South-East is the IPOB sit-at-home order. Ever since the order was declared, business has not been flourishing in the region. While other regions of the country observe normal economic activities every week including Mondays, it is not so here in the South-East. Every Monday, everywhere is shut down as people are afraid of being attacked by criminal elements called Unknown Gunmen who take advantage of the Sit-at-home to perpetrate all manner of crimes that create tensions and unfriendly business atmosphere. The other time, there was shooting all around our environment here in Enugu, some of our indigenous

staff who were going home from work were injured. We thank God these hoodlums could not have access inside our shops but the whole thing is scaring.

Another participant in the KII from Unilever South-East central office Enugu avails:

Our container trucks have been attacked on South-East roads. The other time, our driver tried to move out from the South-East for supply of our inventories to our other business outlet on a fateful Monday morning with the confidence that security operatives directed everyone should go about their normal business., with this security assurance, we engaged in the business outing but surprisingly, the truck was attacked in Nsukka axis of the South-East. The truck was set ablaze and our driver escaped injured.

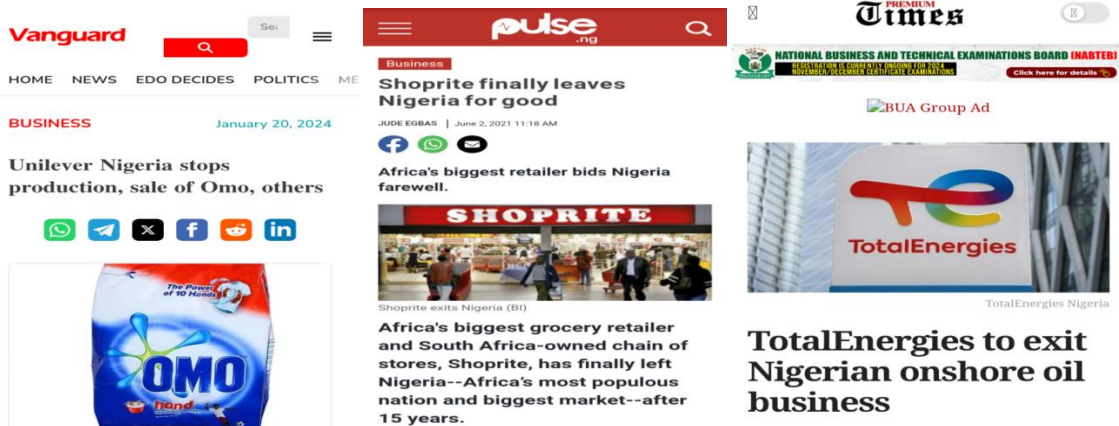
Likewise, a respondent from Cussion Enugu added:

How can our business flourish when we operate for only 4 days and sometimes 3 days in a week? Ever since the sit-at-home order, our business has been going down. The only way we cope is to remain indoor on Mondays and other days declared as sit-at-home. Even on days we managed to go about our business, we no longer engage in late night sales. Sometimes, we leave our clients and customers unattended to while hurrying to close business once it is 6pm for fear of attack.

Some investors in the zone are relocating their businesses outside the zone. It also discourages other serious investors from establishing businesses within the zone. Some foreign investors have closed down their businesses in some parts of the South-East region and while others are as well considering relocating their businesses to other regions which they consider safer and conducive for doing business (Ogba, Akogwu & Ezeh). Such foreign businesses captured in this study include Shoprite, PZ Cussions, Unilever, Total Energies among others not captured in this analysis.

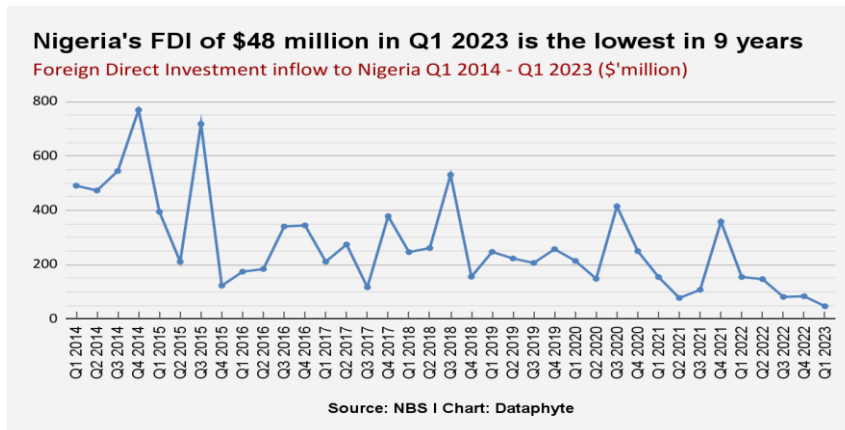
On March 17, 2023, the Unilever, a British multinational consumer goods company announced its intention to exit the home care business category in Nigeria. In September 2023, the Unilever company exited the homecare category of the business. All production of home care products ceased in June 2023 and sales ceased in September 2023 (Businessday, 25th July, 2024). Vanguard News reported on 24th April 2024, that PZ Cussons Plc a British personal healthcare and consumer goods manufacturers said it has commenced a strategic review of its business in Africa, with a consideration of exiting the continent, partly driven by insecurity, economic challenges which has significantly impacted the company's sales and operations, resulting in a 48 percent sales plunge. Furthermore, the company has lamented continuous loss due to insecurity. Hence, its Aba - Abia state factory which hosts their soap and detergent unit faces closure. On 10th February, Total Energies, a French Oil company announced its plan to sell its stake and exit Nigeria; citing incompatibility of health, security and environmental policies (Premium Times, 10th February, 2024). This will affect its South-East depot office at Enugu. Likewise, South African Company, Shoprite Holdings Limited, has announced its exit from Nigeria; citing unconducive and unsafe business environment. The company said it would shut down operations in the country by disposing a 100 per cent equity stake in its Nigerian retail supermarkets (Vanguard News 7th April, 2021). Shoprite is Africa's biggest grocery retailer and South Africa-owned chain of stores which had one of its biggest store in Enugu and other states of the South-East Nigeria. Its exit is part of the ripple effect of insecurity in the region. This undoubtedly affected the economy of the zone.

The pictures below show the news headlines of the exit announcement of the foreign companies stated above



Sit-at-Home and Decline in FDI Flow in the South-East

Azeez (2022) says that both the South-East and the Nigerian economy losses about \$1billion weekly due to sit-at-home order. The Governor of Anambra State, Prof. Charles Chukwuma Soludo, has equally lamented that Anambra state losses about 19.6 billion Naira to the sit-at-home. (Punch News 26th March, 2022) The losses are both for local and foreign businesses. A report by the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) estimated the annual loss of the sit-at-home order in the region at 4.6trillion Naira. Okojie (2023), states that the continuous sit-at-home order has continued to stifle business enterprises in the South-East region. Similarly, the Ebonyi State Governor had earlier said in September 2021 (about three months after the introduction of the weekly sit-at home order), that the South-East region losses over 10billion Naira each day there is enforcement of sit at home order in the region (Vanguard News 15th September, 2021). Foreign Direct Investment Flow to Nigeria from 2014-2024



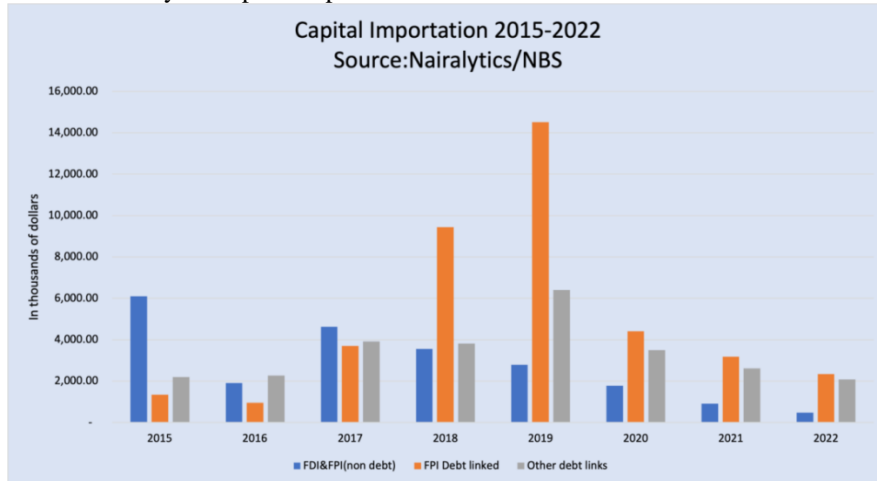
Level of the FDIs in Nigeria from 2020-2024



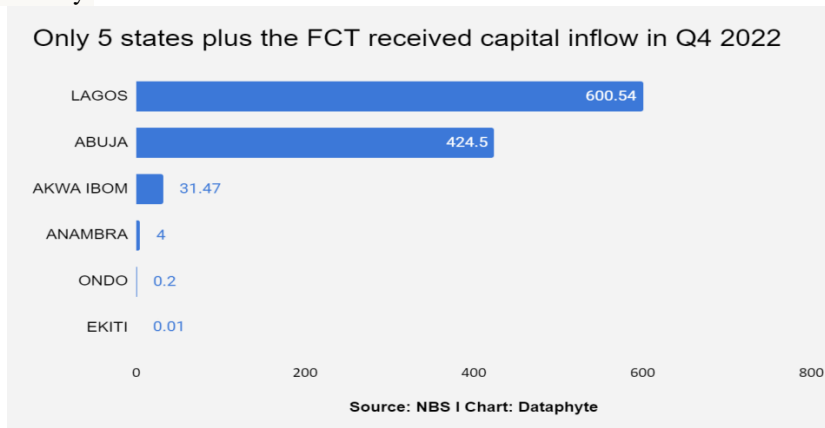
The above graph shows that FDI in 2023 was the lowest the country recorded in 10 years (NBS, 2023). This was elucidated further by the capital importation data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) that the total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that came into Nigeria in the first quarter (Q1) of 2023 was only \$48 million. FDI fell by \$332 million to \$698.7 million in 2021 from \$1.028 billion in 2020. Compared to the previous quarter, the FDI inflow to the country experienced a decline, dropping from \$84 million in Q4 2022 to \$48 million in Q1 2023. This represents a 43% decrease on a quarter-on-quarter basis. Then on a year-on-year comparison, there was a substantial 69% decrease, as FDI fell from \$155 million in Q1 2022 to \$48 million in Q1 2023.

To buttress this, the National Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) revealed that the value of investment announcements in the first three months of 2022 was \$2.58 billion. This is 69 per cent lower than what was announced in the first quarter of 2020 which was \$8.41 billion. Also, Punch News (17th April, 2023) reported that the FDI inflows into Nigeria has been declining over the years, dropped from \$1billion in 2020 to \$699 million in 2021. The report also noted that FDI inflow into Nigeria plummeted by 33 percent in 2022; standing at a measly \$468.91 million which is the lowest in 9 years.

The chart below shows the history of Capital Importation since 2015 – 2022.



According to Financial report by Nairametrics (2023), available data on Nigeria’s capital importation between 2015 and 2022, shows a massive decline in capital importation (another term for foreign investment inflow). Between the last 8 years (2015-2023), the country has only managed to attract a total of \$89.4 billion compared to about \$98 billion between 2007 and 2014. The NBS dataphyte shows that only Anambra state is the South-East state received capital inflow in 2022. The Nairametrics Research opines one of the significant factors that have contributed to the decline in foreign investments in the last 8 years is Nigeria’s challenging business environment orchestrated by insecurity.



This poor socio-economic scenario of Nigeria became worrisome when southeast started experiencing security challenges.

Conclusion

The IPOB sit at home order, which began on august 9, 2021 and continue till this day, is the outcome of agitation for independence of the Eastern region formerly known as Biafra. The result of the study has shown enormous consequences and adverse effect of the sit-at-home on Foreign Direct Investment and the entire socio-economic activities of the zone. The volume of business loss on Monday which is usually the busiest business day in the zone as the first business day of week is huge and unquantifiable. Coupled with high level of incessant attacks, killings and destruction of properties by the unknown gunmen who take advantage of the sit-at-home to unleash mayhem in the South-East potential foreign investors have been scared away. Some of them are relocating while others closing down their businesses completely. Likewise, potential investors are not considering the zone as a right place for investment notwithstanding the business potential of the zone as the business hub-centre of the west Africa. This in turn affects the overall economic development and living condition of the region. Hence, the sit at home has cost the region billions of naira. It has also affected people’s daily income. Greater majority of people in the region who rely and survive on what they earn through their daily businesses (market places, transport agencies, corporate, institutions among others) have been rendered vulnerable; while others are killed. Hence, there is need for swift action that would bring lasting solution to this menace.

Findings

This study reveals that weekly sit-at-home in south-east Nigeria has affected economic activities of the zone as a result of close down of micro and macro-economic activities. Also, there has been consistent destruction of public

places such as market, security personnel and stations, wanton destruction lives, kidnapping, and destruction of goods and properties which have exacerbated fear and withdrawal from business activities by investors. Loss of business hours, business opportunities, patronage and services compelled foreign businesses operating in the region to close down their business while other relocated to their businesses to other regions which they consider more secure, safer and conducive for their businesses. More so, within this period of weekly closure of businesses every Monday new foreign investors and diaspora investors have not been attracted or willing to invest in the zone. Apart from foreign businesses, the income in the region has been on continuous decline and other areas of business such as SMEs, transportation system, financial and social institutions among others have been deeply affected. This has led to poor economic condition in the southeast. In other words, the consequences of the sit-at-home have been huge losses in internally generated revenue, loss of lives and properties, low investment patronage among other facets of economic value. For these reasons, an urgent solution is needed towards ending the sit-at-home order in the Southeast region.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: Since the sit-at-home order is a tool adopted by IPOB for the release of its leader Nnamdi Kanu from detention, there is an urgent need for the Nigerian government to adopt a political approach in his trial and release him to restore peace and conducive business environment to the zone. Also, Government should intensify the fight against insecurity in the region by putting up more security logistics and technology that would facilitate holistic action against the unknown gunmen that indulge in looting, destruction of businesses, killing and kidnapping in the zone which scare investors away. Finally, there is need a regional economic framework for provision of necessary infra-structure, business incentive like free business zones, tax holidays, technical supports to investors that can invest up to \$200,000 in the critical sectors of the economy.

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