

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL SCALE BUSINESSES IN EDO – NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the performance of small scale businesses in Edo North Senatorial district investigated mainly the implications of COVID -19 pandemic on the performance of small scale businesses in the district under investigation. Among others objectives, was the impact of movement restriction policy of government as well as social distancing, on the performance of SME's in the district. Under investigation. A population of 94 registered small scale business owners, in Edo North, were considered for the study, out of which Seventy- four (74) different small scale business owners were chosen through purposive sampling method and were administered questionnaires, but sixty-seven (67) questionnaires were well filled and used for the study. Data were analyzed using Pearson product – moment correlation and findings revealed a significant negative impact between movement restriction, social distancing policy of government and performance of businesses in Edo North Senatorial district, also uncertainty caused by the pandemic had negative impact on business performance. The researcher therefore, recommended that SME's owners should be encouraged to embrace digital transformation and online platform to reach wider audience by establishing e-commerce platform; implementing online payment system and digital marketing strategies to promote their products and services. Finally, all businesses particularly SSB's should develop robust business continuity plans to mitigate future crises. This includes building, resilience, maintaining emergency funds and creating strategies for remote working or flexible operations. These measures could reduce the level of market uncertainties that may be caused by any possible pandemic.

Keywords: COVID- 19, pandemic, small and medium scale, performance.

1.0 Introduction

Corona virus disease COVID-19 pandemic has threatened the survival of many SMEs in the country. The government and other stakeholders have taken measures to mitigate the impact, but the situation remains dire. According to Ofoegbu et al. (2013), Robinson et al. (2021) and Ademola et al (2021) SMEs are the key to the economic development of many emerging nations, including Nigeria. They believed that focusing on small and medium-scale enterprises would help to create jobs, reduce income inequality, produce goods and services for the economy, as well as serve as a mechanism for backward integration and a vehicle for technological innovation and development, particularly in modifying and improving newly discovered technological breakthroughs.

However, the devastating effects of COVID-19 pandemic on both human and material resources in early 2020 cannot be forgotten in a hurry. The Wuhan-COVID-19 emerged in 2019 in China like the way Ebola did in West Africa in 2014, but COVID-19 resulted into global pandemic- which spread across the globe without obstruction (WHO, 2020). This novel virus sparked off various restrictions to movement of people, goods and services. The closure of factories alongside reduction in production was not left out due to the stay-indoors orders.

COVID-19 can produce a range of symptoms, from mild to severe, or even asymptomatic in some cases. Common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, body aches, and shortness of breath. Severe cases may experience pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), organ failure, and ultimately death, particularly among older adults and individuals with pre-existing health conditions. The virus also demonstrated the ability to cause long-term health complications, such as heart and lung damage.

In Nigeria, the case of the pandemic was first discovered in Lagos on 27th February 2020. The Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) recorded 41,804 cases as of 28th July 2020; out of this number 18,704 were discharged and 868 deaths. In an attempt to halt the spread of the pandemic, the government takes various measures ranging from the closure of borders, restrict the movement of people, goods, and services, as well as the closure of markets and worship places. Therefore, on 29th March 2020, the government declared a total lockdown in three states, thus; Lagos, Ogun, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, preventing all activities that are not essential in all those states. Afterward, the remaining states were also locked down as well as banning all interstate movement except for essential services.

The small and medium scale businesses in Nigeria has been seen as a tool that propelled the economy because of its ability to promote productivity, generate employment as well as improving the welfare of the people (Abosede & Onakoya, 2013). However, Joseph (2020) has predicted a decrease in aggregate demand and supply, declining in exports, and an increase in government expenditure due to the negative effects of lockdown among various sectors of the Nigerian economy. Furthermore, this lockdown made the situation terrible for small scale businesses in the country. As rightly indicated, small scale businesses form the larger businesses in Nigeria, which employed more than 70% of the working population in the country (ILO, 2017). This indicates that large proportions of people in Nigeria are involved either directly or indirectly

in small and medium scale enterprises. Then, any adverse economic tremors echoed by the COVID-19 pandemic on these sub-sectors put more than 70% of the working populace exposed to the unique virus.

The following research questions were answered:

- i. To what extent did movement restrictions affect the performance of small-scale businesses in Edo North Senatorial District?
- ii. To what extent did uncertainty caused by the pandemic affect the performance of SMEs in Edo North Senatorial District?
- iii. To what extent did the government's social distancing policy during the pandemic affect the sales volume of SMEs in Edo North Senatorial District?

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the performance of small scale businesses in Edo North senatorial district of Edo state.

Specific objectives are to:

- i. To find out the extent movement restrictions affected the performance of small scale businesses in Edo North Senatorial District?
- ii To ascertain the extent to which uncertainty caused by the pandemic affected the performance of SMEs' in Edo North District?
- iii To find out the extent to which social distancing policy of government caused by the pandemic affected the sales volume of SMEs in Edo North Senatorial District?

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the movement restriction policy and performance of small scale businesses in Edo North Senatorial District

Ho: There is no significant relationship between uncertainty caused by the pandemic and the performance of small scale businesses in Edo North Senatorial District.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between social distancing policy of government occasioned by the pandemic and the performance of small scale businesses in Edo North Senatorial District.

2.0 eview of Related Literature

Concept of COVID 19

According to the International Labour Organization, (2021) the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on SMEs worldwide. From restrictions on movement and social distancing measures to decreased consumer demand and supply chain disruptions, SMEs were hit hard by the pandemic. The International Labor Organization estimated that 1.6 billion informal economy workers were affected by job losses and reduced working hours globally.

According to a survey by the International Trade Centre in 2020, 64% of SMEs reported that their business had been affected by the pandemic. In some countries, the impact was more severe; 88% of SMEs in Kenya reported reduced sales, while in Nigeria, the number was 83%.

World Bank (2020) summarized the following as the key global impacts of covid-19 on SMEs

Movement Restrictions and the Performance of Small Scale Businesses

This concept explores the implications of government policy on restriction of movement to curtail the spread of COVID -19 pandemic. The researcher is poised to investigate if this policy of government has implication on the performance of small scale businesses in the district under investigation.

Uncertainty caused by the Pandemic and the Performance of SMEs

The period of COVID- 19 pandemic was remarkable for hopelessness and uncertainty that led to close of businesses irrespective of size. The researcher intends to investigate the influence of uncertainty caused by the pandemic affected the performance of small scale businesses in the district under investigation.

Social distancing policy of government caused by the pandemic

Social distancing was one of the policies directed at reducing COVID-19 pandemic at the peak of its, spread. This led to re- arrangement of public places like schools, churches, hospitals etc. the study is to investigate the impact of social distancing on the sales volume of small scale businesses in the district under investigation.

Performance of SMEs

Performance refers to the degree to which an individual, organization, or system successfully accomplishes assigned tasks, functions, duties, and responsibilities. It is a measure of the effectiveness and efficiency with which objectives and goals are achieved within a specified period. Performance is often evaluated by comparing actual results with predetermined standards, targets, or expectations. In both personal and organizational contexts, performance reflects the ability to utilize available resources, knowledge, and competencies to produce desired outcomes. Key indicators of performance include time management, technical and managerial skills, productivity, quality of output, efficiency in resource utilization, effectiveness in goal attainment, innovation, adaptability, and customer satisfaction. High performance demonstrates the capacity to achieve objectives with minimal waste of resources while maintaining quality standards. Consequently, performance serves as a critical criterion for assessing success, identifying areas for improvement, and guiding decision-making processes aimed at enhancing overall productivity, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability in an increasingly dynamic environment.

Theoretical Review

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT)

The Resource Dependence theory was proposed by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Solanki in their book "The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective" published in 2022. They developed

the theory to explain the interdependence between organizations and their external environment and the impact of resource scarcity on organizational behavior.

According to RDT, organizations do not operate in isolation, and they depend on external resources, such as capital, raw materials, technology, expertise, and labor, to achieve their goals. The theory also suggests that organizations must cultivate relationships with their external environment to acquire and maintain these resources.

In the context of the impact of COVID-19 on SMEs, RDT can be used to understand how the pandemic has disrupted the external environment and resources that SMEs depend on. The pandemic has led to the closure of borders, disruptions in supply chains, decreases in demand, and financial instability, all of which have affected SMEs. Through RDT, we can view SMEs as organizations that depend on external resources to survive, and the pandemic has significantly affected their ability to acquire and maintain these resources.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT)

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) was proposed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese in 2025. It was initially developed to explain how individuals and organizations manage their uncertainty in communication. In the context of organizations, URT suggests that organizations seek to reduce their uncertainty with their environment, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders, to achieve their goals. The theory also suggests that organizations actively seek information to reduce uncertainty, and they use strategies, such as standardization, specialization, and coordination, to manage uncertainty.

In the context of the impact of COVID-19 on SMEs, URT can be used to understand how SMEs have managed the uncertainty created by the pandemic. SMEs have faced uncertainty in terms of their survival, financial stability, and future prospects, and they have had to manage this uncertainty to adjust to a new normal. Through URT, we can view SMEs as organizations that seek to reduce their uncertainty, acquire information, and use strategies to manage the uncertainty created by the pandemic.

Empirical Review

Robinson et al., (2021) investigated the Impact of Corona virus Pandemic (COVID)-19 Lockdown on Small and Medium Business in Edo State, using a population of 1,119 business operators in Edo State, while 235 respondents were randomly selected. Questionnaire was used for data collection, mean and standard deviation were employed for data analysis, and findings revealed that COVID-19 Lockdown negatively affected sales volume, cash flows and profit margin of small businesses in Edo State. The study recommended increase use of online business transaction as strategy to withstand future crisis.

Ademola et al (2021) investigated the effect of COVID-19 on Small Business in Nigeria. The study employed a purposive sampling techniques involving 321 small business owners registered with the Association of Small Business Owners of Nigeria (ASBON) in Lagos State. Data were collected through closed-ended questionnaires and analyzed using percentages, mean, scores, chi-square and factor analyzed. The study revealed that COVID-19 negatively affected almost all the small businesses surveyed. Many businesses

suffered operational and financial difficulties due to lockdown measures. The researchers recommended credit facilities, tax, waverer, emergency loans, and flexible repayment arrangements as strategies to cushion the effects of the pandemic on (SSBS).

Isaac et al (2022) conducted a study on the Impact of (COVID-19) on Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Performance: Evidence from Nigeria. The researcher adopted a quasi-experimental research design to assess the impact of COVID-19 on SME performance in Nigeria. Data were gathered from SMEs and analyzed statistically to determine the relationship between the pandemic and business performance indicators. The study revealed that COVID-19 significantly reduce SME's productivity, revenue generation and overall business performance. Lockdown policies disrupted supply chains and customers patronage, thereby affecting profitability. The researcher recommended stronger government intervention, financial support schemes and improved adaptability among SMEs.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design. Survey research is conducted to gather information that reflects population's attitudes, behaviors, opinions and beliefs that cannot be observed directly. The population of the study was made up of 94 registered small scale businesses (SSBs) across Edo North Senatorial District of Edo State from which 74 sample size was drawn.

Data for the study was collected from primary source, through the use of structured questionnaire which was designed to elicit information on the impact of covid-19 on performance of Small Scale Businesses in Edo North Senatorial District of Edo state.

The method of data analysis was based on the statistical table format using frequency distribution and correlation via SPSS. From the population of 74 questionnaires which were administered, only 67 questionnaires were properly filled and duly returned which is approximately 91% response rate. Therefore, the analysis is based on 67 relevant questionnaires.

3.0 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

S/No.	Questionnaire Items	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)
1	The movement restriction/social distancing policy occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the performance of my small scale business.	21 (31.3)	27 (40.3)	4 (6.0)	7 (10.4)	8 (12.0)	67 (100)
2	The Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected my SME's revenue and profitability as a result of customers' reduced spending occasioned by the pandemic.	20 (29.9)	38 (56.7)	- -	6 (9.0)	3 (4.4)	67 (100)

3	The overall market demand for my products /services changed since the Covid-19 outbreak.	29 (43.3)	23 (34.3)	7 (10.4)	5 (7.5)	3 (4.5)	67 (100)
4	The uncertainty caused by the pandemic affected my SME's planning processes, including budgeting and forecasting.	14 (20.9)	31 (46.2)	8 (12.0)	9 (13.4)	5 (7.5)	67 (100)
5	The market closure occasioned by the pandemic affected my business negatively.	25 (37.3)	38 (56.7)	4 (6.0)	- -	- -	67 (100)
6	I received financial support from the government and other institutions to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on my SME.	4 (5.9)	5 (7.5)	- -	29 (43.3)	29 (43.3)	67 (100)
7	I had to lay off some employees due to the impact of Covid-19 on my SME	26 (38.8)	19 (28.4)	3 (4.5)	12 (17.9)	7 (10.4)	67 (100)

Table 1. Responses to questions on COVID-19 influences on Small Scale Business.

Note: S.A = Strongly Disagree A = Agree UD = Undecided D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 4.1 shows the respondents' responses to the opinion put before them via the structured questionnaire.

The responses from the table show that 21 respondents representing 31.3% strongly agreed that the movement restriction/social distancing policy occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the performance of their small scale businesses, 27 respondents representing 40.3% agreed, 4 representing 6.0% were undecided on the opinion, 7 representing 10.4% disagreed while 8 representing 12.0% strongly disagreed. From the analysis, it is observed that majority of the respondents representing 71.6% agreed that the movement restriction/social distancing policy occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the performance of their small scale businesses.

Table 4.1 show that on item 2 of the questionnaire, 20 respondents representing 29.9% strongly agreed that the Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected their SME's revenue and profitability as a result of customers' reduced spending occasioned by the pandemic., 38 respondents representing 56.7% agreed, none was undecided on the opinion, 6 representing 9.0% disagreed while 3 representing 4.4% strongly disagreed. From the analysis, it is observed that majority of the respondents representing a whopping 86.6% agreed that the Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected their SME's revenue and profitability as a result of customers' reduced spending occasioned by the pandemic.

The responses from the table show that 29 respondents representing 43.3% strongly agreed that the overall market demand for their products/services changed since the Covid-19 outbreak, 23 respondents

representing 34.3% agreed, 7 representing 10.4% were undecided on the opinion, 5 representing 7.5% disagreed while 3 representing 4.5% strongly disagreed. From the analysis, it is observed that majority of the respondents representing 77.6% agreed that the overall market demand for their products/services changed since the Covid-19 outbreak.

The responses to item 4 on table 4.1.2 show that 14 respondents representing 20.9% strongly agreed that the uncertainty caused by the pandemic affected their SME's planning processes, including budgeting and forecasting, 31 respondents representing 46.2% agreed, 8 representing 12.0% were undecided on the opinion, 9 representing 13.4% disagreed while 5 representing 7.5% strongly disagreed. From the analysis, it is observed that majority of the respondents representing 67.1% agreed that the uncertainty caused by the pandemic affected their SME's planning processes, including budgeting and forecasting.

The responses to item 5 on table 4.1.2 show that 25 respondents representing 37.3% strongly agreed that the market closure occasioned by the pandemic affected their business negatively, 38 respondents representing 56.7% agreed, 4 representing 6.0% were undecided on the opinion, while none of the representing disagreed nor strongly disagreed. From the analysis, it is observed that majority of the respondents representing a whopping 94.0% agreed that the market closure occasioned by the pandemic affected their business negatively.

Table 4.1.2 shows the responses to item 6. It that 4 respondents representing 5.9% strongly agreed that they received financial support from the government and other institutions to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on their SMEs, 5 respondents representing 7.5% agreed, none was undecided on the opinion, 29 representing 43.3% disagreed while the remaining 29 representing 43.3% strongly disagreed. From the analysis, it is observed that majority of the respondents representing a whopping 86.6% disagreed that they received financial support from the government and other institutions to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on their SMEs.

The responses to item 7 on table 4.1.2 show that 26 respondents representing 38.8% strongly agreed that they had to lay off some employees due to the impact of Covid-19 on their SMEs, 19 respondents representing 28.4% agreed, 3 representing 4.5% were undecided on the opinion, 12 representing 17.9% disagreed while 7 representing 10.4% strongly disagreed. From the analysis, it is observed that majority of the respondents representing 67.2% agreed that they had to lay off some employees due to the impact of Covid-19 on their SMEs.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using Pearson correlation with SPSS. The analysis enables us to identify relationship between the dependent variable (SMEs performance) and independent variable (Impact of Covid-19 pandemic).

In view of the research questions and the subsequent responses of the respondents as shown in table 4.1, the three null hypotheses were tested.

Table 4.2: Correlations

Correlation Performance of SMEs due to Covid-9 pandemic	Pearson	1	.519**	.499**	.935**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.001
	N	67	67	67	67
Correlation Movement restriction/ Social distancing	Pearson	.519**	1	.935**	.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001	.000
	N	67	67	67	67
Correlation uncertainty caused by the pandemic	Pearson	.499**	.935**	1	.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001		.000
	N	67	67	67	67
Correlation reduced customer spending occasioned by the pandemic	Pearson	.935**	.519**	.499**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000
	N	67	67	67	67

correlation of data received from
correspondents

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Significance level: (0.01)

Decision Rule: If the p-value is less than the significance level (0.01):

- **Decision:** Reject the null hypothesis.
- **Conclusion:** If the correlation coefficient is significantly different from zero, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables

Hypothesis One - Ho: There is no significant relationship between the movement restriction/social distancing policy and performance of small and medium scale enterprise in Edo North Senatorial District. (Hypothesis one was tested based on the respondents' responses to item one of table 4.1.2).

Decision: Since the probability error (p-value) of 0.000 is less than the significance level of (0.01), the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. It can be inferred from the Pearson correlation table as shown above that the correlation coefficient "r" of .519 is significantly different from zero, therefore, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant linear relationship between the movement restriction/social distancing policy and performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Edo North Senatorial District. The result is further corroborated by the responses of respondents to item one of table 4.1.2 which showed that majority of the respondents representing 71.6% agreed that the movement restriction/social distancing policy occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the performance of their small scale businesses.

Hypothesis Two –Ho: There is no relationship that exists between uncertainty caused by the pandemic and SMEs' planning processes, such as budgeting and forecasting in Edo North Senatorial District. (Hypothesis two was tested based on the respondents' responses to item four of table 4.1).

Decision: Since the probability error (p-value) of 0.000 is less than the significance level of (0.01), the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. It can be inferred from the Pearson correlation table as shown above that the correlation coefficient "r" of .499 is significantly different from zero. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant linear relationship between the uncertainty caused by the pandemic and SMEs' planning processes, such as budgeting and forecasting in Edo North Senatorial District. The result is further supported by the responses of respondents to item four of table 4.1 which showed that majority of the respondents representing 67.1% agreed that the uncertainty caused by the pandemic affected their SME's planning processes, including budgeting and forecasting.

Hypothesis Three – Ho: There is no significant relationship between reduced customer spending occasioned by the pandemic and the performance of small and medium scale enterprise in Edo North Senatorial District. (Hypothesis three was tested based on the respondents' responses to item two of table 4.1).

Decision: Since the probability error (p-value) of 0.001 is less than the significance level of (0.01), the null hypothesis is thereby rejected. It can be inferred from the Pearson correlation table as shown above that the correlation coefficient "r" of .935 is significantly different from zero. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant linear relationship between reduced customer spending occasioned by the pandemic and the performance of small and medium scale enterprise in Edo North Senatorial District. The result is further supported by the responses of respondents to item two of table 4.1.2 which showed that majority of the respondent representing a whopping 71.3% agreed that the Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected their SME's revenue and profitability as a result of customers' reduced spending occasioned by the pandemic.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the impact of covid-19 on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SSBs) in Edo North Senatorial District. It was found via the responses of the respondents that: majority of the respondents representing 61.6% agreed that the movement restriction and social distancing policy occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the performance of their small scale businesses, that majority of the respondents representing a whopping 86.6% agreed that the Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected their SME's revenue and profitability as a result of customers' reduced spending occasioned by the pandemic, that majority of the respondents representing 77.6% agreed that the overall market demand for their products/services changed since the Covid-19 outbreak, that majority of the respondents representing 67.1% agreed that the uncertainty caused by the pandemic affected their SME's planning processes, including budgeting and forecasting, that majority of the respondents representing a whopping 94.0% agreed that the market closure occasioned by the pandemic affected their business negatively, that majority of the respondents representing a whopping 71.3% disagreed that they received financial support from the government and other institutions to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on their SMEs and that majority of the respondents representing 67.2% agreed that they had to lay off some employees due to the impact of Covid-19 on their SMEs.

Findings

The study examined the impact of covid-19 on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Edo North Senatorial District. Based on the specific objectives of the study, the findings are hereby summarized as follows:

- i. Consistent with the Resource dependence theory that organizations and their external environments are interdependent, findings, revealed a significant relationship between movement restriction, social distancing policy and performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Edo North Senatorial district in line with the empirical study of Ademola et al (2021) .Therefore (Null hypothesis rejected).
- ii. Consistent with uncertainty reduction theory that organizations seek to reduce their uncertainty with the environment, the study showed that, there is a significant relationship between uncertainty caused by the pandemic and SMEs' planning processes, such as budgeting and forecasting in Edo North Senatorial District. (Null hypothesis rejected).
- iii. That there is a significant relationship between reduction in customer spending occasioned by the pandemic and the performance of small and medium scale enterprise in Edo North Senatorial District which is consistent with the empirical review of Isaac et al (2022) that COVID-19 significantly reduce SME,s productivity, revenue generation and overall business performance. (Null hypothesis rejected).

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings, it was found that the movement restriction and social distancing policy occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the performance of small scale businesses; that the uncertainty

caused by the pandemic affected SSB's planning processes, including budgeting and forecasting which affected the smooth operations of their businesses, and also, that the Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected SME's revenue and profitability as a result of customers' reduced spending occasioned by the pandemic. It was also found, that, even though, government and other institutions granted financial supports to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on SSBs, majority of the respondents representing a whopping 86.6% disagreed that they received such financial supports. This also further affected negatively, the performance of SMEs in Edo North Senatorial District of Edo State and Nigeria in general. From the forgoing, it is germane therefore, to conclude that the COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating effect on small and medium scale businesses in Nigeria.

Based on the findings, the followings are recommended:

- i. To ease the effect of the movement restriction and social distancing policy on SSBs, they (SSBs) should be encouraged to embrace digital transformation and build an online platform to reach a wider audience. This includes establishing e-commerce platforms, implementing online payment systems, and utilizing digital marketing strategies to promote their products and services.
- ii. SSBs should develop robust business continuity plans to minimize the negative impact of future crises. This includes building resilience, maintaining emergency funds, and creating strategies for remote working or flexible operations, as these measures could reduce the level of market uncertainties caused by the pandemic.
- iii. The Nigerian government, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, should invest in training programs and workshops aimed at up skilling and re-skilling SSB owners and employees. This will enable them to adapt to changing market demands and explore new opportunities within their industries.

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