


# Assessment of Global COVID-19 on SMEs: An Emphasis on Businesses at the Technological Incubation Centre, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of study is the assessment of global COVID-19 on small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) with the case of Technological Incubation Centre (TIC), Ibadan. Three research objectives were raised. A descriptive survey research design was used. The population of the study is 29. Total census survey was adopted as the sampling technique. SPSS software 25 analysis was used to analyze the data. The study concluded that there has been an increase in all the inputs needed for the production processes at the Centre. Therefore, sales of goods at the period of the COVID-19 have been negatively affected, which has similarly impacted employment generation. It's recommended that the management of the TIC should assist the businesses to mitigate the adverse effect of COVID-19 while the Nigerian government should consider the SMEs as an important sub-sector that could restore the economy to a period of better economic growth.

## KEYWORDS

Business Incubator, Business Owners, Creating Shared Value, Diseases, Disruption, Employment Generation, Evaluation, Nigeria, Pandemic, Production, Sales, Wuhan

## INTRODUCTION

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that is ravaging the global economy is causing wider loss of lives, and severe loss in investment. It's the largest public health challenge over the centuries, which has caused a major economic crisis, loss of jobs, reduction in revenue, halting production processes etc. SMEs' supply and demand of inputs and outputs have all been severely dealt with by the covid-19 emergence.

Across the world, the definition of SMEs varies based on the accepted indices in those nations. The definition of small and medium-sized enterprises in Nigeria also differs from time to time and is dependent on the interpretation of the institutions concerned. The TIC in Ibadan is one of the thirty-seven in Nigeria meant to nurture and grow ideas and businesses. The specific objectives are to: explore the effect of the global covid-19 on the Business' production at the Technology Incubation Centre; examine the effect of the global covid-9 on sales of the businesses at the Technology Incubation Centre and investigate the effect of the global covid-19 on employment generation at the Technology Incubation Centre.

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## BACKGROUND

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020), noted that more than half of SMEs now face chronic losses, more enterprises will go into extinction if not supported. In the same survey, it was empirically noted that goods and services are targeted by the pandemic. The measures laid down to contain the widespread of the global covid-19 are 2meter social distancing; use of face mask and sanitizer; unnecessary movement as stipulated by the presidential task force which was constituted by the President Muhammadu Buhari on the 9th of March, 2020 (State House, 2021). Meanwhile, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, (2020) the first case was recorded in Nigeria on the 27th of February, 2020. As at 6th August 2020, 18, 793, 522 cases of COVID-19 have been recorded globally (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020), with Africa recorded 21, 631 deaths out of the global 707, 715 while Nigeria shared 927 deaths which has rose to 2163 by August 4, 2021. In the case of Nigeria, the disease got to the country through an infected Italian citizen who got in contact with a Nigerian citizen who was subsequently infected with the coronavirus. Hence, the virus began to spread through Lagos state, Ogun state, Abuja, Oyo state to other parts of the country (Ozili, 2020).

Small and Medium Scale Enterprises(SMEs) has proven to be a major tool adopted by the developed nations to attain socio- economic development (Opafunso & Adepoju, 2014). The total number of persons employed by the SMEs sector as at December, 2013 stood at 59,741,211, representing 84.02 percent of the total labour force. While, female entrepreneurs accounted for 22.75percent in SMEs. Employment generated in Oyo State SMEs accounted 147,200 (male) and 59,501 (female) both representing 10.86 percent (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, 2013).

The popularity of TICs in the globe led Babangida's regime in Nigeria to embrace TICs in 1988 as a veritable blueprint for propelling SMEs. The Federal Government formally developed the nation's TICs in 1992 under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme. The pilot centre in Lagos, was founded at Agege in 1993 (Oyedele et al., 2020) in (Bubou & Okrigwe, 2011). This was followed by Kano and Aba in 1994. The enactment of Decree No. 5 of 1995, assigned the oversight and coordination of TICs to the aforementioned ministry with effect from July 1995 (Akhueomonkhan, Raimi, Patel, & Fadipe, 2014).

## MAIN FOCUS OF THE ARTICLE

The study's broad objective is the assessment of Covid-19 on SMEs with emphasis on businesses at the technological incubation Centre, Nigeria.

## Issues, Controversies, Problems

### The Concept of SMES

Due to their potential to increase economic production and human well-being, the importance of small-scale enterprises to the growth of any economy has been generally recognized (Acho & Abuh, 2018). Geographical area and the essence of the business being carried out are also other perspectives to the definition (Dahuda, 2019). Small-scale firms are one of the modern methods used by developed nations to advance their economies (Aliyu, 2018) in (Fasua, 2006).

In the Nigeria context, Small enterprise is regarded as that one with employment strength of 10-49 and the medium enterprise as the one with employment capacity of 50-100 with asset less than 50 million and 500million respectively (Eniola, 2014). It is the guiding power and a major pillar of the Nigerian economy. Economically, this sector holds the key to the Nigeria's sustainable growth (Oluwadare & Oni, 2016). It is evidence around the world that SMES provide an effective means of stimulating indigenou entrepreneurship, enhancing greater employment opportunities

(Olapade, 2017). The ownership system, which largely circles around a key individual or family, is a key feature of Nigeria 's SMEs (Aliyu, 2018; Onugu, 2005). Among the importance of SMEs is generating employment opportunities (Ezema, 2014; Opafunso & Adepoju, 2014; Rahanaty, 2009).

### *The Concept of Technological Incubation Centre*

TIC draws diverse meanings. Technology industry incubation centers, business incubations, incubators (Ekesiobi et al., 2018; Iwuagwu, 2011) are other ways for explaining TICs.

The intervention offered to SMEs by the 37 TICs in Nigeria includes: provision of start-up incubation room at a heavily subsidized rate; availability of venture mentoring/training; access to mutual secretarial support; special legal advice; non-interest revolving loans as start-up funds/seed capital; prompt product creation and marketing assistance; business support (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2014).

### *Theories*

There is need for theoretical support, encompassing sound and theoretical paths, not only in the academic discourse but every facet of letters (Aruleba, 2019) in (Akinyemi et al., 2015). For any form of analysis, theory gives good understanding and guidance. The theories and models of economic growth are the proven ways of achieving economic growth and meaningful progress, emulating the past experiences of industrialized countries. Common growth theories are linear phases of growth models (Obileye & Adetola, 2019; Raimi & Ogunjirin, 2012). This theory relates to the SMEs in the growth perspective. The theory state that when jobs are scarce, people willing to work will be threatened, while the economic condition will continue to get worst and the growth of such business is automatically depleted. In this situation, people have lost jobs due to the effect of Covid-19, direct and indirect jobs are no longer available, prices of commodities have increased which have led to drastic reduction in the Gross domestic profit (GDP).

The theory of structural change development promotes the need to turn a developing nation such as Nigeria from a rural, agrarian and oil-dependent economy through the process of structural change into a new, manufacturing economy. Arthur Lewis model and Fei-Ranis model used current economic theory and statistical research to stress that developing countries would endure and repeat the socioeconomic experiences of their developed counterparts with a view to reducing hunger, illiteracy, illnesses, poor governance, loss of self-esteem. Nigeria as a developing and consuming nation has been going through the structural phase of becoming a radiant manufacturing economy until the disruption of covid-19 surface. Many manufacturing companies either large or small has been forced to shut down temporarily, while others have been able to downsize the workforce. This is not an exemption to the SMEs at the TIC. Hence, this has bastardly affected the growth of businesses at the technology innovation centre.

Creating shared value (CSV) promotes heavy participation of private businesses and government in fostering the growth of entrepreneurship through shared value in contemporary times. CSV is focused on enhancing the strategies and access of small companies to better technology and expanding the local cluster of small suppliers. In the CSV, the role of government is clearly to control and create an atmosphere for good market relationships (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2014; Chiedu, 2012).

### *Problems*

The COVID-19 pandemic has a significant influence on the world commerce. It is increasingly clear that the epidemic has especially affected SMEs with countries at varying levels of lockout or loosening operations. The COVID-19 has posed health and economic problems for Nigeria SMEs (AllAfrica, 2021). In addition, restraint movements around the nation were imposed by the states and federal government. The establishment of SMEs was considered an all-time necessity, which has continued to gather prominence and the expectation is to increase its influence and importance on the future's gross domestic profit (Onugu, 2005; Opafunso & Adepoju, 2014). To boost SMEs in Nigeria, the

Federal Government formed the National Board for Technology Incubation to introduce the TICs in the 37 centres. Technology Incubation is a specific program that include frameworks for market growth, infrastructure and the commercialization of emerging technologies by individuals. By helping them in the early stages of growth, this has been defeated by the implications of covid-19. It is intended to foster and expand new and small companies, technologies, inventions and entrepreneurs (National Board for Technology Incubation, 2021).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employs a descriptive survey design to assess of Global Covid-19 on SMEs: An Emphasis on Businesses at the Technological Incubation Centre in Nigeria. The population (29) of the study is the businesses that domiciles at the TIC Ibadan. This also serve as the sample size. Total enumeration which is otherwise known as census survey was adopted as the sampling technique, the work of (Aruleba, 2019) supported the use of census survey. Census survey non-probability can be used for a small population with or without similar characteristics. In other words, judgmental or purposive sampling techniques can be used to represent the census survey or total enumeration. The data administration and collection were assisted and done by a staff of the TIC who use to be the intermediary between researchers and the entrepreneurs that domicile at the TIC. He possesses knowledge and understanding of successful data administration and collection, he has been doing this for these years. Thus, he is an expert in data administration and collection.

In a quantitative research, sample size of 10-50% of the entire population is acceptable (Evelia et al., 2014; Tiberious et al., 2016). This study achieved 100% response rate from the population, it was concluded that the response rate and sample size is excellent. All the Section of the survey was presented in frequency and percentage table using SPSS software 25.

## **RESULTS**

From the demographic Table 1, Majority (52.4%) of the respondent are male by gender while (47.6%) goes to the female business owners. This tell that the male by gender dominate the business ownership at the technology incubation centre. It indicates the interest of men to have business than the women in the geographical location of the study.

The age range that accounted for the highest is 31-45years with (51.7%) followed by 46-60years, 15-30years and, 60years and above, with the following corresponding percentages (24.1%), (20.7%), and (3.4%) respectively. The majority of the respondents are in the age range of 31-45years, this shows that the TIC business owners are full of strength, gathering of experience and ever dynamic. This is a true reflection of what is practically obtainable in reality. By all indication, the SMEs owners have the capacity to quickly produce good result than their aged competitors. Hence the businesses are expected to be innovative since the owners are of the computer and innovative era in businesses.

62.1% of the respondents are married, single amounted to (34.5%), and the widowed have (3.4%). The SMEs owners operating from the TIC are married. This means that the venture owners will be less committed and have divided attention which are at the detriment of the smooth operations of the businesses, as there are more to carter for and care for in respect to marital issue or family as a whole. With this, the SMEs owners operating from the TIC will not be able to get an optimum commitment from the in their service to the success of the businesses since their marital status indicated married.

Religion: Christian faiths have (65.5%), the Islamic faithful (27.6%), and the traditional have (6.9%). This shows that the respondents and resident of the study area are Christians. The entrepreneurial activities at the TIC are relative to Christians with a lesser proportion being Muslim and traditional worshipers. By implication, the Christian faithful are entrepreneurial, hence they tend to accumulate wealth, fame and due recognition in the society due to the social enterprise of solving societal problems.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender:	11	52.4
Male	10	47.6
Female	8	-
No Response	29	100
Total		
Age in the last birthday:	6	20.7
15-30	15	51.7
31-45	7	24.1
46-60	1	3.4
Above 60	29	100
Total		
Marital Status:	10	34.5
Single	18	62.1
Married	1	3.4
Widow/widower	29	100
Total		
Religion:	19	65.5
Christianity	8	27.6
Islam	2	6.9
Traditional	29	100
Total		
Highest Educational Qualification:	2	6.9
Diploma/ NCE	16	55.2
B.Sc or its equivalent	10	34.5
M.Sc or its equivalent	1	3.4
Doctorate Degree	29	100
Total		
How long have you been operating at the technology incubation Centre?	20	69.0
1-5	7	24.1
6-10	1	3.4
11-15	1	3.4
Above15	29	100
Total		
Number of casual staff/ direct labour:	19	73.1
1-5	3	11.5
6-10	2	7.7
11-15	2	7.7
Above15	3	-
No Response	29	100
Total		
Number of permanent staff:	21	72.4
1-5	2	6.9
6-10	6	20.7
Above15	29	100
Total		
Which of this best describe your business?	21	72.4
Goods	8	27.6
Services	29	100
Total		

Source: Researcher's' Data Base, (2020).

Educational qualification: (55.2%), (34.5%), (6.9%), (3.2%) with the following certificate Bachelor of science and equivalent, Master of science and equivalent, Diploma/NCE and, Doctorate degree respectively. This shows that majority of the employees possess B.Sc. It is an indication that they are literate and as such, they will be able to read and write, as well as uses their educational instinct at every developmental phase. The enterprise owners will be able to relate effectively and engage in business contacts with clients successfully, hence portraying the good image of their companies and TIC to the outside world.

(69.0%) of the respondents opined that the operations of their enterprises have been between 1-5 years. (24.1%) have been operating from the TIC for the period between 6-10 years. 11-15 and Above 15 years accounted for (3.4%) each. This implies that the businesses have gain ground at the TIC and it has accorded them extent of recognition in the environment, hence an increase in physical and financial structure is inevitable.

Causal staff, the majority (73.1%) of the respondents belongs to the range of 1-5, 6-10 has (11.5%), both 11-15 and 15 above have (7.7%) each. This short time services are in abundance at the TIC. This is in alignment with the reality and nature of the holistic entrepreneurial activities at the TIC. By implication the venture owners will be able to cut cost on salaries and wages, such will be channel into the production process which has the capacity to drastically improve the financial prospects of the SMEs.

(72.4%), (20.7%), (6.9%) accounted for 1-5, 15 and above, and 6-10 range of permanent staff working with different enterprises at the TIC. The permanent status of the employees is a treat to the financial buoyance and comprehensive development of the businesses, as funds meant for monthly salaries can be devoted into the production processes and investment on stakeholders in other to have high profit margin.

In comparing the status of respondents, it was revealed that direct labour are more than the permanent employees employed by the ventures. This implies that operations are executed mostly by the casual workers, which means that they may have other engagement which will likely reduce their commitment to the course of goods and services at the TIC.

Business type, majority (72.4%) of the respondent opined that they are into selling and buying of goods. Others (27.6%) claimed that rendering of services is their choice. This means that the two category of business operation are in full force at the TIC. Trades such as manufacturing of products and services such as laundry, creative works etc characterized the business type at the TIC. Thus, the services and goods has been a great use for the populace as it has met their daily, weekly, monthly and yearly wants, needs and aspirations. Hence, it has help to contribute her own quota to the development of the TIC, Oyo State, Southwest and Nigeria gross domestic product. The efforts of (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2014) are the same with this findings. The authors claimed that the business activities are manufacturing in nature. This finding went further to delineate it to broad categorization of goods and service. Based, on the happenings at the TIC, service activities are barbing, consulting etc while that of goods are bakery, powdered products etc.

Table 2, the majority (67.9%) of the respondents scarcely agreed that there has been increase in the cost of raw materials for production. While the remaining firmly agreed 32.1% on the increase of the raw materials for the production processes. This means that that there has been increment in the cost of raw materials since the emergency of the global disruption (covid-19). The implications include that, there will be increase in the production output, thereby leading to rise on the production price and the bulk of the burden will be bear by the last consumer. The report and effort of (Bragagni & Xhaferraj, 2021; Cai & Luo, 2020) aligns with this finding that an increase has occur in the cost of raw materials. (60.7%) of the respondents rarely disagree, (21.4%) completely disagree while both rarely and wholly agree have (10.7%) and (7.1%) respectively. On the discourse, there is a decrease in the transport cost of carriage inward and carriage outward. This implies that there hasn't been reduction in the transportation cost of goods returned and sold out, rather there has been increase. This increment will be an addition to the cost of production, thereby causing increase in sales price to

**Table 2. The effect of the global covid-19 on the businesses' production at the technology incubation center**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
There is an increase in the cost of raw materials for production: Agree Strongly Agree No Response Total	9 19 1 29	32.1 67.9 - 100
There is a decrease in the transport cost of carriage inward and carriage outward: Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree No Response Total	6 17 3 2 1 29	21.4 60.7 10.7 7.1 - 100
The transportation cost of return inward and return outward has decrease: Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree No Response Total	3 19 6 1 29	10.7 67.9 21.4 - 100
Direct labour traceable to production process has been increasing since the evolvement of corona virus: Disagree Agree Strongly Agree No Response Total	7 18 3 1 29	25.0 64.3 10.7 - 100
Due to the covid-19 pandemic, there has been shortage of electricity supply to the technology incubation centre: Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree No Response Total	2 20 6 1 29	7.1 71.4 21.4 - 100
The price of repairing faulty production equipment has increase because of the global covid-19: Disagree Agree Strongly Agree No Response Total	4 18 6 1 29	14.3 64.3 21.4 - 100
My business has incurred more expenses on the factory space: Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree No Response Total	1 11 13 3 1 29	3.6 39.3 46.4 10.7 - 100

Source: Researcher's' Data Base, (2020).

the consumers. It will bring about low patronage. The transportation cost of return inward and return outward has decrease. (Rivera, 2020; Yazır et al., 2020) opined that increase or increase in the cost of carriages can occur at any point. This matches the finding that an increase has occur during the cost of the pandemic. (67.9%) of the respondent incompletely disagree, (21.4%) partially agree and (10.7%) strongly disagree. It shows that an increase on the returns (inward and outward) of materials or goods or both has taken place since the inception of the global pandemic. This denote that the inward and outward returns of materials or goods taken place in the period has escalated the sales price of the businesses' produces.

Most (64.3%) of the respondents partially agreed, (25.0%) scarcely disagree and (10.7%) fully agree that direct labour traceable to production process has been increasing since the evolvment of corona virus. It implies that there has been increase in the wages of direct labour/causal staff involve in the production process. This will lead to scarcity of labour, because upward review has affected the wages. It will also have effect on the total cost of production, thereby leading to an increase in sales price. The respondents concluded that due to the covid-19 pandemic, there has been shortage of electricity supply to the technology incubation Centre. They responded in the following order (71.4%) partially disagree, (21.4%) incompletely agree and (7.1%) strongly disagree. It means that there has been steady supply of electricity since the pandemic evolve. In other word, the covid-19 didn't affect the supply of electricity to the businesses operating at the technological incubation centre. The implication is that, there wouldn't be unnecessary expenses on fuel to power generator. The electricity availability has fast-tracked the production processes. (Turk & Kamiya, 2020) inquiry is against this finding.

Majority (64.3%) of the respondents rarely agree, (21.4%) completely agree and (14.3%) impartially disagree that, the price of repairing faulty production equipment has increase because of the global covid-19. It can be concluded that the price of repairing faulty production equipment has increase. Its effect will be on delay in production, increase in production cost and sales price which will be lastly borne by the consumers. The submission of (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2020) is of the same with this revelation.

Since the evolvment of the global corona virus, the respondents asserted that their businesses have incur more expenses on the factory space. (46.4%) fully agree, (39.3%) partially disagree, (10.7%) strongly agree and (3.6%) firmly disagree. This mean that the businesses operating from the technological incubation centre has incur more expenses on the factory space. This will be a means of discouragement to the business owners, since sales aren't the same as before the advent of the covid-19. With this, there will be reduction in produces and the few that will be produced will attract high selling price. It might has well put temporary short down to the businesses, as those that can't continue to bear the increasing expenses will have to stop production and relocate to favourable site. (Bhushan et al., 2017) only sum this as manufacturing overhead cost. However, the business owners claimed management has jack up the rent fee for the office space.

Table 3, the respondents answered in the following order: scarcely agree (51.7%), impartially disagree (31.0%), wholly disagree (10.3%), and (6.9%) completely agree to the discourse on there has been fall in the demand of products during this covid-19. It can be concluded that reduction in demand of products during the lockdown has taken place. This means that the fall in the demand for products has led to fall in production, sales, revenue and market presence. The investigation of (Marchant-Forde & Boyle, 2020) aligns with this finding. (48.3%) rarely disagree that there has been an increase in the sales of goods, since the beginning of this pandemic (corona virus). (34.5%) of the respondents partially agree, (10.3%) strongly disagree and, (6.9%) wholly agree. This denote that an increment hasn't occur to the sales of goods, since the emergence of the global disruption (corona virus). In other word, a reduction in the sale rate is obtainable for the period. This implies that revenue has fallen, workers has been laid off and shortage of the products at various households. Contrarily, the inquiry of (Aday & Aday, 2020) is not in support of this revelation.



**Table 3. The effect of the global covid-9 on sales of the businesses at the technology incubation center**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
There has been fall in the demand of products during this covid-19:	3	10.3
Strongly Disagree	9	31.0
Disagree	15	51.7
Agree	2	6.9
Strongly Agree	29	100
Total		
There has been an increase in the sales of goods, since the beginning of this pandemic (corona virus):	3	10.3
Strongly Disagree	14	48.3
Disagree	10	34.5
Agree	2	6.9
Strongly Agree	29	100
Total		
I incur higher expenses during this covid-19 than before the pandemic:	2	6.9
Disagree	21	72.4
Agree	6	20.7
Strongly Agree	29	100
Total		
My firm have goods in excess at the warehouse/store due to low patronage:	1	3.4
Strongly Disagree	11	37.9
Disagree	17	58.6
Agree	29	100
Total		
The marketers of my business have been unable to move around the city in other to make sales:	8	27.6
Disagree	20	69.0
Agree	1	3.4
Strongly Agree	29	100
Total		

Source: Researcher's' Data Base, (2020).

I incur higher expenses during this covid-19 than before the pandemic: (72.4%) impartially consented to it, (20.7%) wholly agree, and (6.9%) scarcely disagree. It is concluded that the businesses have incurred higher expenses during the lockdown and the entire covid-19 Period. The higher expenses incurred has led to fall in the factory production which can be via raw materials, direct expenses or rent on space. Also, the higher expenses could be informed of transportation or transactions. In overall, it will slow the pace of the businesses growth since more expenses is being incurred. (Bartik et al., 2020) disagree with this revelation. It was (58.6%) of the respondents that partially agree, (37.9%) rarely disagree, and (3.4%) completely disagree that their firm has goods in excess at the warehouse/store due to low patronage. It indicated that there are excess of goods produced, that hasn't been sold due to the covid-19 pandemic in the warehouse. This is as a result of low patronage which was initially ascertained in the preceding analysis. Long stay of the goods at the store will bring about loss of the products, inclusive of all the raw material and fall in revenue. This also confirm the reduction in revenue for the period. Despite the increase in raw materials and general production input, the businesses are still incurring loss because of excessive goods at the warehouse. This corroborates with the aforementioned comparison.

The marketers of my business have been unable to move around the city in other to make sales. Agree (69.0%), Disagree (27.6%) and Strongly Agree (3.4%). This means that there was restriction of movement during the period. By implication, it hinders the sales target and causes reduction in returns. This is line with the reality that lockdown was in full force during the period.

Table 4. The effect of the universal covid-19 on employment generation at the technology incubation center

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
I have no option than to reduce the number of my employees/workers, because of the covid-19 influence:	6	23.1
Disagree	19	73.1
Agree	1	3.8
Strongly Agree	3	-
No Response	29	100
Total		
I have employed permanent workers since the start of the global corona virus:	1	3.8
Strongly Disagree	16	61.5
Disagree	9	34.6
Agree	3	-
No Response	29	100
Total		
My business has employed casual workers since the start of the global corona virus:	16	61.5
Disagree	10	38.5
Agree	3	-
No Response	29	100
Total		
Generally, there has not been new employees at this technological incubation centre, since the beginning of the corona virus:	1	3.8
Strongly Disagree	6	23.1
Disagree	17	65.4
Agree	2	7.7
Strongly Agree	3	-
No Response	29	100
Total		
The shortfall in the revenue has created no space for new recruitment:	1	3.8
Strongly Disagree	4	15.4
Disagree	21	80.8
Agree	3	-
No Response	29	100
Total		
Inability to source for capital is a threat to employing new staff during this period:	1	3.8
Disagree	24	92.3
Agree	1	3.8
Strongly Agree	3	-
No Response	29	100
Total		
I have personally taken charge of the sales and promotions, due to low patronage:	5	19.2
Disagree	18	69.2
Agree	3	11.5
Strongly Agree	3	-
No Response	29	100
Total		

Source: Researcher's Data Base, (2020).

Table 4, larger percent (73.1%) of the respondent partially agree that, they have no option than to reduce the number of employees/workers, because of the covid-19 influence. (23.1%) incompletely disagree to the assertion, while (3.8%) strongly agree. The meaning is that employees has been forced to be sacked, due to the effect of the corona virus. This tells that workers have been laid off, due to low patronage, reduction in profit and expenses incurred for the period. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020) support this exposition. Most (61.5%) of the respondent rarely

disagree, (34.6%) partially agree, and (3.8%) firmly agree to the point that, they have employed permanent workers since the start of the global corona virus. It's concluded that permanent workers haven't been employed since the advent of the covid-19. This shows that the production being done during this period are done by the business owners or they solicited for helping hands from friends and family. This will increase the number of unemployment rate in the country, as well as increase insecurity and other social vices. (Bartik et al., 2020) support this discovery.

(61.5%) of the respondents partially submitted that their business has employed casual workers since the start of the global corona virus. While (38.5%) of them rarely agree. The businesses haven't employed casual staff during the pandemic. This denote that there is excess of labour, whereas labour is ready and willing to work, but the resources to employ them isn't available. This implies that the excess labour which aren't demanded will lead to joblessness and increase in crimes. The following ascending order (65.4%), (23.1%), (7.7%) and (3.8%) with the following respective likert scale partially agree, rarely disagree, totally agree, and strongly disagree, are the response rate of the respondents on the specific question "Generally, there has not been new employees at this technological incubation centre, since the beginning of the corona virus". This shows that on a general level, the businesses at the technology incubation centre haven't employ new staff either on temporary or permanent basis, since the advent of the covid-19. By implication, there wouldn't be increase in general production rate. And there will be no more profit, since production rate has been reduced. This is a negative to the Nigeria economy as the able hands has been render useless, because of the covid-19. (Bartik et al., 2020) inquiry aligns with this result.

The (80.8%) of the respondents asserted partially that the shortfall in the revenue has created no space for new recruitment, (15.4%) wholly disagree and absolutely disagree (3.8%). This means that due to the advent of covid-19 pandemic, which has caused decrease in the revenue, has orchestrated no new recruitment at the TIC. By implication, the unemployment rate has been stagnant or increases. This findings agree with the submission of (European Comission, 2020). (92.3%) incompletely agree, both rarely agree and strongly agree have (3.8%) each on the point of "Inability to source for capital is a threat to employing new staff during this period". This denote that lack of access to finance is a huge barrier in employing new employees during this period. It implies that an embargo or restriction has been place on employment generation at the TIC. This will aid increase in societal crimes since the qualified and youth potential workers are idle. Majority (69.2%) of the respondent scarcely agree, (19.2%) fairly disagree and (11.5%) completely agree that they have personally take charge of the sales and promotions, due to low patronage. This means that the business owners have taken charge of the sales and promotion activities, because of the low patronage. A shortfall in the low patronage is equivalent to dismissal of workers and taken charge of activities. This is a heavy blow to the employment generation. The overall analysis in this session corroborate with the submission of (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2014) which stressed that jobs have been lost due to the influence of the covid-19. Also, these findings are in line with the realities at the TIC which have led to job cuttings or down-sizing. As the jobs are mostly been done by the business owners since the effects have become unbearable in the employment generation and operations of the businesses.

## **PRACTICAL AND MANAGERIAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The implications of the study's findings span through the practical and managerial relevance on the SMEs owners, employment generation, weakened economy, the TIC management and the sub-sector (small and medium scale enterprises). The study has made the business owners who domicile at the TIC to assess the state of affairs scientifically, which has given no room for assumptions and predictions. On the national affairs, there has been increase in unemployment rate, since direct and indirect jobs have been cut off and taken over by the business owners due to the heavy effect of the covid-19. The management of the TIC has an agency of the federal government will make use of this working tool as a panacea to cushion the effect on the small businesses and by extension the national

economy. Furthermore, the sub-sector will empirically be aware and adopt the recommendations in order to become resilient by taking collective decisions to overcome the problems with internal and external measures.

## **CONCLUSION**

It was concluded that, there has been increase in all the inputs needed for the production processes ranging from cost of wages, raw materials, carriages and returns. Also, the sales of goods at the period of the covid-29 have been negatively affected. Casual staff and personal execution of tasks has become the order of the day. Lastly, employment generation has been negatively affected by the pandemic.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It's recommended that the management of the TIC should assist the businesses to mitigate the effect of the Covid-19 on the controllable indices in term of reduction or waiver of the monthly space rent, electricity bill that have linkages to sales and production. This will help to channel the money in employing staff, thereby helping to grow and avoid sudden extinction; this might be in term of finance and raw materials palliatives. Government should consider the SMEs as a veritable tool to lump the nation from the effects of Covid-19 by taking employability actions that will bring about ease of doing business to the SMEs.

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