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EFFECT OF COMMUNAL CLASHES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES IN EBONYI STATE: A STUDY OF SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN EBONYI STATE

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Study focused on the effect of communal clashes on the performance of SMEs in Ebonyi State. **METHODOLOGY:** Study adopted a survey method using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics while hypotheses were tested with Chi-square and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. **RESULT:** Communal clashes have relationship with the survival of SMEs ($r = 0.864$, $P<0.05$). Cessation of movement/ absenteeism of workers has relationship with sustainability of SMEs ($r = 0.770$, $P<0.05$). Early dialogue between the aggrieved parties will prevent communal clashes. Government building social amenities for all on the land if settlement is not feasible. Buffer in form of soft loans or grants to adversely affected SMEs owners were suggested strategies ($X^2_C=141.144 < X^2_E=0.599$. **CONCLUSION:** Disruption of production processes, no patronage, expiring of stored goods, no cash flow for loan repayments and total extinction of some SMEs were some of the effects of communal clashes on SMEs. **IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH:** Study provided alternative to clashes by proposing early dialogue through town-hall meetings between aggrieved communities or government taking over the element of dispute to prevent communal clashes.

Keywords: Communal Clashes, Smes, Survival, Performance, Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Communal clashes have become a recurrent decimal in Nigeria with it`s dangerous effect on lives and properties. The new issues occur as soon as the existing ones seem to fade away from people`s minds. Nigerian dailies are awash with incidence of such clashes. Virtually all communities at one time or the other experience clashes that have degenerated to huge loss of lives and properties, injuries inflicted on people and displacement of inhabitants of such areas turning them into refugees. Prominent among them are Tiv – Jukun clashes in Taraba and Benue states, Ife and Modakeke inter communal conflicts, Aguleru – Umuleru in Anambra state, boundary disputes between communities from Cross River and Ebonyi states, clashes between communities from

Enugu and Kogi states, Izzi and Ezzah communities among others. (Relief Web press, Nextier SPD 24th January 2020)

Communal clashes are those clashes that crop up between communities that share common boundaries. Often times the conflict begins as one community trespasses into the other community`s land either for farm work or for exploiting their mineral resources as bona fide owners. The rightful owners of the trespassed land may bring this move to the knowledge of the trespassers, if it is not managed well may degenerate to bloodletting and burning of houses and other properties. It could also be caused by conflict between families which may result in killing or any other kind of destruction, if the other community goes for reprisal (field survey, 2021). Also, one of the major causes of the clashes is the problem of improper sharing of basic amenities like portable water where other communities may not have and may not be allowed to use the available one and other need- based grievances (Allen, Emeka, Kobimdi, Chinelo, 2019).

Sometimes different groups have used both constitutional and unconstitutional means to protest in other to draw the attention of government to their plight, unfortunately the successive governments have used repressive policies and instigating communities against the other to quell the protest (ibid). The inability of the government to address both the immediate and remote grievances is the main cause of these communal clashes, example Ikwo and Izzi (Abakaliki)

The role of SMEs in the economy cannot be over emphasized in the area of employment generation, export growth and other contributions for development. To be specific, SMEs contribute to the tone of 91% of businesses, 52% 0f total GDP in South Africa while in Nigeria the statistics is 48% of the National GDP, 96% of businesses and 84% of employment for 5years (Nigeria Bureau of statistics, 2010). Furthermore 2010 survey report on SME in Nigeria conducted by National Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with SMEDAN posit that the SME sector is strategically positioned to take in 80% of jobs in Nigeria, improve per capita income, increase value addition to raw materials supply, improve earnings, enhance capacity utilization in key industries and unlock the economic expansion and GDP growth (Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013)).

As laudable as these predictions may sound, they remain utopic with the unprecedented social unrest in Nigeria in general and Ebonyi state in particular. Allen et al (2019) observed that the re - occurrence of communal clashes in many communities have posed devastating consequences on the development like, destruction of human capital and infrastructure, diverting resources which could have been used for progressive ventures into repairs, disrupting production processes among others.

Ogunmupe (26th November 2020) opine that when insecurity destroys the livelihood of a community, its inhabitants` `Die twice`. First, they lose businesses which are the means of their livelihood, second, they physically die. In his view the internally displaced persons are waiting for their second death. Unfortunately, this level of insecurity is taking place under the conscious watch of our leaders whose primary assignment is to protect lives and property. This evil fire ought to be nipped from the bud by different tiers of government, the local government area, the state and the federal governments. They are rather reactionary, trying to quell the situation and restore peace and tranquility using the security operatives at a time the environment has already been devastated (Azazi 2011).

Insecurity according to Guardian reporter, Emmanuel (2021 1st November) has devastating effect on the SMEs and every

sector of the economy whether caused by communal or religious clashes. It has driven many entrepreneurs' who, ab initio enjoyed booming businesses but were destroyed by the clashes to join criminal gangs or aid them just to survive.

This assertion was further supported by the survey done by other researchers on Insecurity in Nigeria that the clashes and other social unrest have wiped away many thriving enterprises. (Allen et al, 2019; Ogunmupe, 2020 26th November; Orji et al 2015). To be specific, Beekeeping Extension Society, a honey producing company located at Kaduna was moved away from Kaduna where there is full scale religious war to Kano, Gombe and Bauchi states. A UN representative in a press statement announced that they spend $1.5 billion yearly on humanitarian issues in Nigeria, and food scarcity has been the resultant effect in the country (Bayo Ogunmupe, 2020 November 26) such huge amount could have been used for development.

Ebonyi state has really suffered unwarranted bloodletting in the last few years through communal clashes, Eziulo – Ezza, Effiong – Ezza, Ikwo – Izzi among others. These communities are either fighting for farm land or mineral deposits. Ikwo and Izzi (Abakaliki) are richly endowed with LEAD deposit which was discovered in 1925. The exploration and exploitation activities were at its lowest ebb at the initial time until now it has become full blown, and everyone is interested hence the conflict. The unfortunate aspect of the situation is that while the expatriates and the state government are enjoying the proceeds of lead, the communities are enduring the consequences of ecological disaster and loss of their farm land. Agreeing with the above, (Oshita and Osaze, 2010 cited in Allen et al, 2019) posit that the exploration and the exploitation of mineral resources destroy wild life, arable land rendering farmers and hunters unemployed. Worst still houses are pulled down because of erosion, creating gullies that endanger lives and farmland of the inhabitants.

Communal clashes have devastating effect on the communities that suffer it. Whenever it occurs, lives and properties of these communities are in danger, there is usually unprecedented killings, burning of houses both residential and business, infrastructure and people escaping for their lives, disserting their homes and businesses to hoodlums to vandalize. It is a major hindrance to development in Nigeria, huge resources that should be used for developmental ventures are used to repair the damages caused by the clashes. Inhabitants of such communities suffer psychological trauma as they roam about in their hidings as displaced people. Aside the destruction of lives and properties, there is cessation of movement, absenteeism of workers, and no patronage of goods from SMEs, abandoning goods for a long time get them expired and wasted. Many owner managers and important workers are either killed or maimed. No cash flow for repayment of loans and many SMEs get extinct. Communal clashes are like wild fire that does no good to anyone yet no serious attention is given to address and nip it at the bud before it escalates. The frequency of the clashes does not suggest that any lasting solution has been meted. It becomes expedient that strategies to bring lasting solution or at least ameliorate the effect on SMEs in the area be given.

Previous studies centered on exposing the causes and the effect of such social unrest on lives and properties, not much work have been done on its effect on SMEs hence the study.

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Ho: Killings and hoodlum activities do not relate to the survival of SMEs in the area.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: Cessation of movement and absenteeism of workers do not relate to the sustainability of SMEs in the area

Hypothesis 3

Ho: There are no strategies to end or ameliorate the effect of communal clashes on SMEs

1.7 Scope and Delimitation

The study covered the effect of communal clashes on the survival and sustainability of SMEs in Izzi, Ikwo, Abakaliki local government areas of Ebonyi state with 540 representatives of SMEs from both manufacturing and service-oriented businesses in these areas.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Insecurity and Organizational Performance

Insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury. It is the anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure.(Vocabulary dictionary, Online) Chris Aluta (2021) affirms the above definition of insecurity as he pointed out that "Nigeria once Africa's largest economy continues its downward trend due to insecurity caused by Coronavirus issues, Banditry, EndSARS, and other security issues. It is a known fact that the crime rate in Nigeria is so high, institutions remain weak with unprotected property, rights, high corruption, and undue influence. According to Charles Ike (2021), this is not the best of time for Nigeria. The current security challenge, no doubt, has brought the country to her knees. From the North to the South, the story is the same. If it is not banditry, killer herdsmen, unknown gunmen, it is the Boko Haram insurgency or communal clashes.

The situation is overwhelming, such that nobody is safe any longer. The security agencies are even the worst hit. Many security personnel have lost their lives, while trying to secure the lives and property of fellow citizens, even their facilities have been targets for attacks, as many police stations have been burnt down and their vehicles. Ebonyi State, like most other states in the country, is not left out especially from communal clashes. The level of bloodletting, burning of houses both residential and business is unprecedented.

Communal Clashes

Conflicts at any level emerge from dissimilarity of interface, wants, objectives, values and desires within the competition for assets to meet forcing requests on social life (Otite, 2001 cited in Krahmann 2003). As a matter of reality, Man in a socio-physical environment lives in ceaseless prepare of reliance and interdependency which frequently produces inconsistencies and clashes. Communal clashes constitute one of the major repeating issues standing up to the landmass of Africa. In spite of the fact that, communal clashes are not unused, especially in socio-cultural complex social orders with tall number of ethnic nationalities and dialect bunches like Nigeria. Pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria experienced inter-kingdom dynastic feuds, and inter-community conflicts (Ogban-Iyam, 2005 cited in Onifade and Imhonopi 2013)). Many contemporary Nigeria communities have experienced several cases of communal conflicts. Communal clash could be a frame of viciousness that exists over ethnic or communal lines, the rough parties feel solidarity for their particular bunches

(Charles, 2021). United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime incorporates any struggle and frame of savagery between communities of diverse devout bunches, distinctive orders or tribes of same devout bunch, clans, ethnic roots or national root as communal viciousness. Be that as it may, this avoids strife between two people or two families. Communal viciousness is found in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Australia. (Bolanle and Adetunde, 2015)

The results are often loss of lives, destruction of properties, hunger and starvation, among others. In the recent incidence of communal clashes between Izzi and Ikwo communities, not less than 12 persons lost their lives. The crisis is between Eyibuchiri in Ikwo local government area and their sister clan, Izzi in Eyigba, Abakiliki. (Orji, Eme and Nwobi 2015).

Hoodlum activities:

Hoodlum is anyone from a dangerous thug to a young person` who's just up to no good`. The vocabulary online dictionary explains Hoodlums as young people who are involved in crime or generally up to no good. A car full of hoodlums may just destroy things without a cause, they are simply callous. Hoodlums are loud, aggressive, and violent. They are part of gangs that commit crimes. If a young person robs a store or mugs someone, he's a hoodlum. A hoodlum can also be called a gangster, thug, or toughie. Steer clear!

Hoodlums' activities lead to rape, snatching of phones, motorcycles, and money, vandalize residential or business houses, among others. (Premium newspaper,2021 4 July). For instance, it was reported that One person was killed and scores injured when suspected hoodlums believed to be land grabbers attacked residents of Isiu community in the Ikorodu area of Lagos State. The hoodlums shot sporadically to disperse and scare residents who were going about their lawful duties (ibid)

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs. According to Charles, (2015) organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of firm`s outcomes: financial performance; product market performance; and shareholder returns.

Financial performance

Financial performance refers to measuring a company's operations and policies in monetary terms. In other words, in terms of value in dollars, pounds, Euros, etc. Assessing a firm's financial performance is by looking at its return on assets, return on investment and by measuring value added. Financial performance is shown in the financial statement. A financial statement analysis is the process of reviewing key financial documents to gain a better understanding of how the company is performing. While there are many different types of financial statements that can be analyzed as part of this process, some of the most important, especially to managers, include the: cash flow statement, balance sheet and income statement

Market performance

Market performance is the effectiveness of suppliers in a market/industry in utilizing economic resource to their maximum efficiency and to the ultimate benefit of consumers. Key elements of market performance include: productive efficiency, distributive efficiency, product performance and technological progressiveness. Market performance is determined primarily by market structure and market conduct. For example, in markets where economies of scale are significant, a high level of market

concentration may be required in order to minimize supply costs. In conduct terms, price competition between firms is likely to benefit consumers whereas collusion is likely to have an adverse effect on consumer welfare. These and other elements of market structure and conduct are a major concern of a government's competition and Industrial Policies.

Shareholder value

Shareholder value is the esteem conveyed to the value proprietors of an enterprise due to management's capacity to extend deals, profit, and free cash stream, which leads to an increment in profits and capital picks up for the shareholders. A company's shareholder esteem depends on key choices made by its board of executives and senior management, including the capacity to form shrewd ventures and produce a sound return on contributed capital. On the off chance that this esteem is made, especially over the long term, the share cost increments and the company can pay bigger cash profits to shareholders.

Organizational sustainability

There are now numerous different ways to define "the sustainable organization." One later definition of a sustainable organization is that one that "contributes to maintainable advancement by conveying at the same time financial, social and natural benefits, the so-called triple bottom-line." This version is useful, but it is malleable and certainly incomplete. Therefore, when asking ourselves whether something is "sustainable," we should be asking ourselves the following questions: Is it maintainable? Can we endure it? Over the long-term, are our resources being depleted or permanently damaged? These are near questions requesting a "Yes or "No" reply. There's no room for flexibility. Something cannot be "increasingly sustainable" or "more sustainable." It either is sustainable or it isn't (Achumba, 2013)

Research shows that companies with high ESG ratings have a lower cost of debt and equity, and that sustainability initiatives can help improve financial performance while fostering public support. According to Charles (2015), nearly 3,000 employees said the strongest motivating factors to adopting a sustainable mindset are to align with a company's goals, missions, or values; build, maintain, or improve reputation; meet customer's expectations; and develop new growth opportunities.

Theoretical framework

FRUSTRATION–AGGRESSION–DISPLACEMENT THEORY.

Typically, too known as Frustration–aggression theory, a hypothesis of animosity proposed by John Dollard, Neal Mill, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Burns in 1939, and assist created by Neal Mill in 1941 and Leonard Berkowitz in 1969. The hypothesis says that animosity is the result of blocking, or disappointing, a person's endeavors to achieve a goal.

In 1941, the Yale gather clarified their unique explanation which was "that the event of forceful behaviour continuously presupposes the presence of disappointment and, contrariwise, that the presence of dissatisfaction continuously leads to a few shape of animosity". Because it was the moment portion of this theory lead perusers to think that disappointment might as it was have hostility as a result, and it did not permit the plausibility that other reactions seem emerge and abrogate the animosity reaction. The Yale group thus reformulated the hypothesis as follows: "frustration produces instigation to a number of different types of response, one of which is aggression". With

this new formulation, the researchers left more place for the idea that aggressive impulses are not the only kinds that can emerge when an individual feel frustrated. Other impulses, such as fear of punishment, can outweigh or even attenuate aggression instigations until it disappears, which would explain situations where frustration does not lead to outright aggression.

When to begin with defined, the theory expressed that dissatisfaction continuously goes before hostility, and animosity is the beyond any doubt result of disappointment. Two a long time afterward, be that as it may, Mill operator and Burns re-formulated the theory to recommend that whereas dissatisfaction makes a have to be react, a few frames of hostility is one conceivable result. Hence, the re-formulated hypothesis expressed that whereas dissatisfaction prompts a behavior which will or may not be forceful, any forceful behavior is the result of disappointment, making disappointment not adequate, but an essential condition for animosity.

The theory endeavoured to clarify why individuals substitute and the cause of viciousness. Agreeing to Dollard et al, disappointment is the "condition which exists when a goal-response endures impedances", whereas hostility is characterized as "an act whose goal-response is harm to a living being (or a life form surrogate)". The hypothesis says that dissatisfaction causes animosity, but when the source of the disappointment cannot be challenged, the hostility gets uprooted onto a guiltless target. For illustration, in the event that a man is disrespected and mortified at his work, but cannot react to this for fear of losing his work, he may go domestic and take his outrage and dissatisfaction out on his family. This hypothesis is additionally utilized to clarify riots and transformations, which both are accepted to be caused by poorer and more denied segments of society who may express their bottled-up dissatisfaction and outrage through savagery.

The Social Identity Theory by Henri Tajfel (1979) updated by Dr Saul McLeod (2019)

Henri Tajfel (1979) posits that the world is categorized into two `them and us` (the in-group and the out- group). The belief is that cultural and value differences as well as group interests all influence relationships between individuals and groups in different ways. This dichotomy tends to exaggerate the differences in the groups and the prejudiced view about the other group may lead to communal clashes. Furthermore, a number of conflicts grow out of a past history of conflict between groups that has led to the development of negative stereotypes, racial intolerance and discrimination, (Faleti, 2006). The differences in value, invariably creates the “We and Others” dichotomy: The fact that others are perceived as different, makes us feel they are entitled to less or are inferior by reason of values. This disrupts the flow of communication between us and them and to that extent, twists perceptions that we have about each other” (ibid.p.55).

It is also noted that sect members “attracted several descriptions where they operated based on the perceptions of the local population in some communities, where it existed, the sect and its members were described as terrorists and persons with psychiatric challenges” (ibid.p.450). Bringing this further home in Ebonyi state, the Izzi – Ezza conflicts is a test case of some group feeling that they are natives while the other group are strangers hence the clash.

METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive survey design while structured questionnaire arranged in 5 – point Likert scale format of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree and undecided was used to obtain data for the study. Questionnaires were distributed to workers of different institutions in Enyibuchiri community of Ikwo local government area and Enyigba community of Abakaliki Local Government Areas in Izzi clan both in Ebonyi state. The population of this study was 540 comprising members of the randomly selected organizations in Ikwo and Abakaliki local government areas in Ebonyi state, with a sample size of 230 obtained using Taro Yamane statistical formula at 5% error tolerance and 95% degree of freedom A total of 200 out of 230 copies of questionnaire distributed were returned, while 30 copies were not returned. Data collected were presented in frequency table while the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and Chi- square statistical tools were used to test the hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The data obtained were presented and analyzed with descriptive statistics to provide answers for the research questions. At the same time, the corresponding hypotheses were tested with the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient version 20 and chi-square at 0.05 alpha level.

Question 1:

How do killings and hoodlum activities relate to the survival of SME?

Answer: There is a positive relationship between killings and Hoodlum activities and the survival of SMEs in the area

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the relationship between communal clashes and the survival of SMEs with a mean response of **1.0250** and STD deviate of **0.21118** for survival of SMEs. By careful observation of standard deviation values, it can be said that there is about the same variability of data points amongst the dependent and independent variables.

Table 3 is the Pearson correlation coefficient matrix of the relationship between communal clashes and the survival of SMEs in the areas showing the correlation coefficient significant of **0.864**, which indicates that correlation is high since correlation significance is at 0.05 level (2 tailed). This implies that there is a positive relationship between communal clashes and the survival of SMEs **(r =0.864)**. The computed correlation coefficient is higher than the table value of **r =0.195** with **0.198** degree of freedom **(df = n-2)** at an alpha level for a 2-tailed test **(r = 0.864, P<0.05)**. Since this result indicates a positive relationship between communal clashes and the survival of SMEs, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 1: *Relationship between communal clashes (killings and Hoodlum activities) and the survival of SMEs*

S/N	OPTIONS	SA	A	SD	D	U	
1	Most SMEs are owned by the managers therefore the death of the owner manager as a result of the clashes may lead to the extinction of such businesses	154	40	1	5	-	200
2	Killings or injuries inflicted on the major workers of the organizations may lead to ineffectiveness of the business and eventual closure of the business	100	80	2	10	8	200
3	Vandalizing the business houses or important infrastructure by Hoodlums may lead to the closure of the business	60	70	30	35	5	200

Source: field, 2022

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics*

	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	N

Communal clashes (killings and Hoodlum activities)	1.0400	0.24227	200
Survival of SMEs	1.0250	0.21118	200

***Correlation is significant at 0.00 level (2 tailed)*

Table 3: *Pearson correlation coefficient matrix of the relationship between communal clashes and Survival of SMEs*

Communal clashes (killings and Hoodlum activities)	Pearson sig (2-tailed correlation)	1	0.864
	Pearson correlation		0.000
	N	200	200
	Sig (2-failed) N	0.864	1
		0.000	200
		200	

Question 2:

How do cessation of movement and absenteeism of workers relate to sustainability of SMEs in the areas?

The desertion of the area as a result of communal clashes and absenteeism of workers disrupt production processes and other business activities making it difficult to sustain SMEs in the area Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of the relationship between cessation of movement/absenteeism of workers and sustainability of SMEs mean response of 4.6200 and standard deviation of 0.75585

Table 7 above shows the result of Pearson correlation analysis between cessation of movement /absenteeism and sustainability of SMEs. From the table above, there is a high correlation coefficient of r = 0.770 that exists between the two variables. P<0.05 implies that cessation / absenteeism of workers relates positively and significantly to the sustainability of SMEs in the area. Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Table 4: *Cessation of movement/ absenteeism of workers relate to the sustainability of SMEs*

		SA	**A**	**SD**	**D**	**U**	**TOTAL**
1	Desertion of the area and absenteeism of workers disrupt production processes and affect adversely the sustainability of SMEs	130	60	3	3	4	200
2	Cessation of movement prevents customers from patronizing the products of SMEs	190	4	3	2	1	200
3	Desertion of the business area for a long time can lead to the expiration of some goods which is a waste to SMEs	180	10	4	3	3	200
4	Cessation of movement/desertion of the area for a long time affects cash flows for loan repayment	80	100	10	6	4	200
	TOTAL	580	174	20	14	12	800

Table 5: *Descriptive statistics of the relationship between Cessation of movement / absenteeism of workers and sustainability of SMEs.*

	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative%**
Strong Agree	580	72.5	72.5	72.5
Agree	174	21.8	21.8	94.3
Strongly Disagree	20	2.5	2.5	96.3
Disagree	14	1.8	1.8	98.5
Undecided	12	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	800	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey 2022

Table 6: *Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Sum	Mean	Std Deviation
Q2	800	3696.00	4.6200	0.75585
Valid N(list-wise)	800			

**Question 2 Responses*

Table 7: *Descriptive Statistics of the relationship between Cessation of movement / absenteeism of workers and sustainability of SMEs*

	Cessation of movement/ absenteeism of workers.	**Sustainability of SMEs**
Cessation of movement/ absenteeism of workers	Pearson correlation	0.770
	Sig (2 –tailed)	0.002
	N	800
Sustainability of SMEs	Pearson correlation 0.770**	**
	Sig. (2-tailed) 0.002	1
	N 800	800

***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Question 3:

What strategies will end or ameliorate the effect of communal clashes on SMEs

Early dialogue between the aggrieved parties will lead to settlement of the grievances and peace will be restored.

Table 8 is the output of the computed chi-square values from the cross-tabulated statistics of observed and expected frequencies with response options of strongly agree, to strongly disagree based on the responses of the research subject from the manufacturing and services firms. Pearson chi-square computed value **(X^R = 141.144)** is greater than the chi-square tabulated value **(X^2= 5.99)** with **0.5** degree of freedom **(df)** at **0.05** level of alpha **(X^2_c= 141.144, P<0.05**

Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the alternative hypothesis if the computed chi-square value is higher than tabulated chi-square value otherwise reject null hypothesis.

Decision

Since the Pearson chi-square computed **X^2 = 141.144** is more significant than chi-square tabulated value **X^2 =5.99**, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, we concluded that early dialogue between the aggrieved parties will lead to settlement of the grievances that can cause clashes. Whereby there is no settlement, the government should take over the property and build social amenity for all. Again, those who are instigating the clashes should be reprimanded, Government should provide a buffer in form of soft loans or grants to SMEs owner to ease off the effect on their business. These are strategies that could either end or ameliorate the effect on SMEs

Table 8: *What strategies will end or ameliorate the effect of communal clashes on SMEs?*

S/N	OPTIONS	SA	A	SD	D	UD	TOTAL
1	Early dialogue between the aggrieved parties can lead to settlement and stop the clash.	120	50	10	15	5	200
2	Government should take over the land and build social amenity for all if settlement is not feasible	180	10	3	7	-	200
3	Those who benefit from the clashes and as such instigate communities against the other should	170	10	2	10	8	200

	be fished out and reprimanded as a restrain to others.						
4	Government should provide a buffer in form of soft loans or grants to owners of SMEs to ease off the effect of the clashes on their business	150	20	10	10	10	200
	Total	620	90	25	42	23	800

Source: field Survey 2022

Table 9: *Determine the strategies to end the communal clashes or ameliorate the effect on SMEs* (**Chi square tests)**

	Value	**DF**	**Assump. Sig (2-tailed)**
Pearson Chi Square	141.144(a)	2	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	161.612	2	0.000
Linear-by-linear Association	92.943	1	0.000
No of valid cases	800		

Summary of the Findings

The following were the findings:

There is a relationship between communal clashes and the survival of SMEs (**r =0.864, P<0.05)**

There is a relationship between cessation of movement/ absenteeism of workers and sustainability of SMEs **(r = 0.770, P<0.05)**

Early dialogue between the aggrieved parties will lead to settlement of the grievances that can cause communal clash. Government taking over the land and building social amenity for all if settlement is not feasible can stop the clashes. Again, those who are instigating the clashes could be reprimanded to restrain others. Buffer in form of soft loans or grants be given to SMEs owners to ease off the effect on their business. These are possible strategies that will hinder conflicts from escalating or ease off the effect on SMEs. **(X^2_c=141.144 < X^2_E=5.99).**

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that disruption of production processes, no patronage, expiring of abandoned goods, no cash flow for loan repayments and total extinction of some SMEs were some of the effects of communal clashes on SMEs in these areas. Based on the findings of the study, the study made recommendations. Whenever there is inter communal grievance over any issue, leaders should create room for town hall meeting early enough to resolve the grievance before it escalates to killing or any other form of destruction. Youths that are often the hoodlums should be engaged with either learning trade or gainful employment so that they will not be available for such heinous activities. Those who benefit from the clashes either from government circles or from the communities by instigating one community against the other should be fished out and reprimanded as a deterrent to others. Government should provide a buffer in form of soft loans or grants to adversely affected SMEs owners to ease off the effect if it happens.

Suggestions for Further Research

Effect of communal clashes on the development of communities.

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