

IPOB AGITATIONS AND POLITICAL STABILITY IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SUPPORT GAINED

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Abstract

In this paper, an assessment is carried out on the agitations by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) for self-determination and how these affect the political stability of Nigeria. This is done through survey research design that made use of instruments of data collection such as a questionnaire in addition to interviews administered to IPOB members, IPOB leaders, community leaders, government representatives, police, and IPOB Lawyer from selected areas. The collected data were analyzed using quantitative data analysis software – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 32. The study revealed that the support gained by IPOB promotes continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB and will lead to a decrease in political stability in Nigeria. The paper concludes that it is common for people to always identify with and support the group they belong to especially when they are fighting for a common cause that will be beneficial to all. In alliance with the findings, the suggestions from the paper are that policies of inclusiveness, where different groups as IPOB will be part of an entity without seeking for a separate country, should be supported either internally or externally. This will also raise the confidence IPOB with their group and various groups that are engaged in different types of agitations in Nigeria and furthermore will promote political stability in Nigeria.

Keywords: IPOB Agitations; Self-determination; Pro-Biafran and Agitator Groups; Political stability; Indigenous People of Biafra; Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a pro-Biafran group that agitates for self-determination of their people from the Nigerian government. IPOB as a group was established by a Nigerian British citizen, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu. IPOB has become the outstanding pro-Biafran group that agitates for self-determination

despite the existence of other pro-Biafran groups such as Biafran Zionist Movement (BZM), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Biafran Liberation Front (BLF), Biafran Independent Movement (BIM), and Biafran Actualisation Forum (BAF). Studies have shown that agitations of a group may receive support or rejection from their people in particular and the larger society in general (Khan, 2017; Porto, 2003).

The support a group gets or the lack of it definitely affects their success or the outcome of their agitations at the time of agitation. IPOB as a group has their members operating in Nigeria and in Diaspora. They have created awareness on the plight of their people which they have done through the media (Radio Biafra and Television), evangelization, and also in local and international interests by reaching out to International Organisations such as the United Nations (UN). The group is in need of support both from local and Diaspora interests towards their agitations.

The study is out to answer the question on how IPOB agitations for self-determination have an influenced on political stability in Nigeria.

2. AGITATIONS FOR SELF- DETERMINATION AND POLITICAL STABILITY

Self-determination is about peoples' rights to determine their own destiny. This principle is coupled with choosing their political status, ascertaining the shape of their economy, and cultural and social upgrading; this results in political independence and total integration with a state (UNPO, 2017). Weller (2009) in his opinion posits that when people possess the right to freely determine the nature of their politics, and their sociocultural existence, it is self-determination. Weller's submission corroborates Carly's (1996) earlier affirmation that self-determination exists when colonialism comes to an end and a new state begins.

Self-determination is the desire of every group of people. Even in a situation of absence of separation, people want to be treated without discrimination, marginalization, and intimidation. This is because self-determination is all about people's rights to determine their freedom in society. Self-determination in a country helps in national integration and also in ensuring that there is political stability in the country. Agitations for self-determination around the world take different dimensions. People have what they fight for and the strategies employed by them may share some resemblance but are not exactly the same. When people agitate for self-determination, the outcome may be determined by the level of support, the type of government, or the strategies the group employs. Whatever the outcome of agitation, it may significantly or insignificantly affect the political stability of the country concerned a la Sudan, in which the former sit-tight ruler, President Omar Hassan al Bashir, was forced out of power by the Sudanese army as a result of vehement protests and agitations by his people. In this light, political stability or otherwise means that the political situation of the country can be predicted thereby making the environment to seem conducive or not for intending investors both from within and outside the country (Ene, Arikpo, Abam, Jeffery, Williams, Albert & Dunnamah 2013).

However, Sottilota (2013) views political stability as a controversial concept stating its three different interpretations: firstly, as the non-existence of domestic civil conflict and violence that has become widespread; secondly, as government longevity and thirdly as where there is absence of structural change, in other words, no change has been effected both from outside and inside the political system (Gberevbie, Ayo, Iyoha, Duruji, & Abasilim, 2018; Imhonopi, Urin, George, & Egharevha, 2013; Okafor, Imhonopi, & Urin, 2011). In the opinion of Paldam (2016), he maintained that political stability can be seen in four different ways which are: stable government, stable political system, internal law and external stability. In any country, political stability could be assured when there is a democratic system having within it justice, honesty, accountability, and transparency. This level of stability can be achieved through coordinated enlightenment.

When the Catalonians went to the polls to decide on the opinion of their people about separation from Spain, it can be rated as part of peaceful and transparent strategies towards separation. The 90% outcome of the votes that are supporters of independence was not accepted by the Spanish government but instead was declared illegal and this led to the eruption of crisis that caused injuries to many Catalans, affecting their political stability and eliciting apologies from Spanish government representatives (BBC News, 2017). The outcome of events in Catalonia is evidence of the peoples' support for self-determination.

In an attempt for people to have freedom of self-determination, they will always design a strategy that will help them achieve it. For example, the United Nations went ahead to sponsor a 'Popular Consultation' on August 30, 1999, where East Timor voted to thrash the Indonesian autonomy offer supervised by the United Nations as part of the change to achieve an independent state (Drew, 2001). Indonesia was under pressure

to leave East Timor as a result of which on October 15, 1999, repeal on their unpopular law of July 1976 which annexed East Timor, was done by the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly (IPCA) (Drew, 2001). This development undoubtedly created good grounds for the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) to fully take charge of East Timor. Agitators for freedom share a feature in common which is their continuous belief and hold onto successful outcome. A popular saying that 'united we stand and divided we fall' can be used to describe the unity by the East Timorese evidenced in the outcome of their vote to be out of Indonesia. That is exactly the type of support people need to break away into freedom.

According to Sukma (2004), the background to Aceh's conflict is strongly tied to its non-compliance to centralization, exploitation of its economic resources, use of force on its people, and exemption from punishment (Wennman & Crause 2011). In correspondence with the above assertion, the leaders in the local areas of Aceh confirmed that the major reason behind conflict in their land was the exploitation of their economy that had put them among the wealthiest in Indonesia even though their per capita income remained among the poorest (VOA, 2009). The Aceh people have a great desire for self-determination that they did not just sit to watch. Below is the declaration of Aceh's self-determination:

We the people of Aceh, Sumatra, exercising our right to self-determination and protecting our historic right of eminent domain to our fatherland do hereby declare ourselves free and independent from all political control of the foreign regime of Jakarta and the alien people of the Island Java. Our fatherland, Aceh, Sumatra had always been a free and independent sovereign state since the world began (Tengku, 1984 cited in Kadir, 2015, p.129).

Aceh for a long time had agitated for self-determination from Indonesia. Aceh had lasted under the Indonesian government for half a century with a long period of human rights abuse by the Indonesian government (Global Non-Violent Action Base, 2001). A lot of killings of the Aceh people were recorded in their struggle for self-determination; deaths of sixty people and 150 with wounds in the village of Pulo Rungkom, May 1999, were recorded while a number of people ranging from 53 and 72 in July lost their lives in Beutong, at a primary school that belongs to the Muslims (Global Non-violent Action Base, 2001).

The Aceh people made use of rallies as one of their strategies in agitation for self-determination. At the beginning of November, a rally was organized in Banda and a large number participated in their thousands. It was also part of the Aceh people's strategy to monitor the government and the military to secure information for the safety of their people. In the submission of Global Non-violent Action Base (2001, p 1):

An undercover organization called Black Cats joined the campaign by spreading agents across the Aceh province whose jobs was to suppress rumours by reporting the truth and to organize neighbourhood patrols to catch "rumour mongers" that may have been paid by the army. The Black Cats also established contacts with the army officers and the Free Aceh Movements (GAM) in order to quell the potential conflict.

Aceh's civil war has been recorded in three stages:

- a. The first stage was between 1976-1979 and has features of less intensity;
- b. The second stage happened from 1989 and was characterized by high-level fight which generated 2,000 to 10,000 deaths.
- c. The number three stage took place around 1999 and 2005 resulting in 2,000 and 6,000 deaths (Ross, 2005 cited in Wennmam & Krause, 2011).

The problems the Aceh people are facing is not without a solution. Several arrangements were made towards peace. As made known by Kadir (2015), discussions took place between January and July 2005 between the Indonesian government and the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) which led to the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This particular agreement seems to have worked more than the others before it as it led to the cessation of fire and hostilities. The GAM and the Indonesian government signed a peace accord in 2005. Aceh was made to have greater autonomy and control of its natural resources and the European Union established the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) to oversee the implementation of the agreement (Global Non-violent Action Base, 2001). The positive outcome in Aceh can never be disconnected from the total support that was in place at the time of the peoples' suffering.

The leadership of a country and its structures cannot be dissociated from the state of different groups in the society irrespective of their being majority or minority groups. According to Frankfurt (2011), he pointed out the Igbo possession of skills and business acumen that make them develop the country. These skills and business acumen are ordinarily expected to motivate other citizens to be glad to live with them. It is

important to realize that different people have their different identities and these also do serve as their pride. It is not compulsory for other regions to recognize the strength of the Igbo but it is for the Igbo to be steadfast in their own efforts and continue to achieve goals. In the description of the Igbo made by Eze (2015), the different communities that have hosted the Igbos have developed fear of the Igbos with the feeling they are a threat to their own position. A good example is the May 14, 1953 attack on the Igbos that resided in Kano at that time. This incident worsened the relationship between the regions and never helped political stability even in the present political system. This also shows that the industrious nature of different regions is not the same. The Igbos have that gift and have also channelled it towards nation-building. In further analysis, Abdulahi and Baba (2014) opined that, in a nation-state, segregation does not exist but full rights of citizens and national integration is to ensure that the peoples' opportunity and access to the resources of the state using the formula agreed to by the nation-state is activated.

Whichever type of policy is put in place, it is the nature of leadership that will bring it to perfection. Duruji (2012) stated, with special reference to the period after the Nigerian Civil War, how Igbos have been marginalized in areas such as politics, economy, and social aspects of life and there is also underrepresentation in the federal appointment. All civil wars fought in different countries are bound to destabilize different sectors which is why many countries do the needful of avoiding war but channelling efforts towards achieving growth and development. Every country needs integration in order to achieve greater force towards growth and development. It is still obvious that some factors may work for or against national integration. It is the responsibility of the state to pursue those factors that are favorable to it. It is a fact that the exploitation and division caused by the colonial masters are not favorable to Nigeria. The high level of corruption, ethnic politics, and mismanagement of available resources have plunged the country into the dungeon. "This problem is further compounded by the inter-regional isolationism, resulting from the local exploitation of the local productive resources like groundnut, cocoa, rubber and others within each region and these products fetched relatively large incomes to the regional leaders" (Kawonise, 1992, p. 61). The large portion of the blame goes to the government whose constitutional responsibility of maintaining law and order in the society has been compromised over the years.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Group theory is employed in this study for the analytical framework. Scholars such as Smith (1964), Garson (1974) and Duruji (2010) have identified with this theory in their different works. In Group theory, a renowned assumption says that individuals that have similar behaviors and share the same desires are brought together to agitate and defend their causes (Onah, 2010).

The group theory also assumed that maintenance of the society's stability is made possible due to the achievement of a state of equilibrium in the group pressure and corrections made on the activities of the government (Varma, 1975). This assumption has positioned the government at the top in terms of being in control of affairs as it is related to the existence of groups in the society.

Groups exist independently but there exists a level of interconnections and interactions between different groups in the society. IPOB as a pro-Biafran group interacts with other groups such as Ohanaeze Ndigbo. There also exist other pro-Biafran and non-pro-Biafran groups. Some have been identified as sympathizers, and there is in existence youth forums and different levels of interconnections with these groups.

The group theory may have been criticized because of its American background which is seen as non-complementary with African culture. Another criticism of the theory could be it did not recognize the values of existing individuals in the society when not attached to any group. Despite these criticisms, group theory has been used in this study as it is best for analyzing IPOB's activities and its suppression by the Nigerian government.

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis below is tested towards the achievement of this paper

H₀. The supports gained by IPOB both locally and internationally have not significantly influenced political stability in Nigeria.

5. METHODOLOGY

This paper made use of survey research design. The respondents were selected from the IPOB groups selected from different areas of study. The study areas are different six areas in the six states in Nigeria including Abuja, they are; Mbaise Independent Unit (Imo State), Owuwanyanwu unit Fegge, Onitsha

(Anambra State), Ogoni Mobilization Unit (Rivers State), Ikot Ekiriba Unit Akpabuyo (Cross Rivers State), Favour Unit Igbanke (Edo State), IPOB Group Lagos including FCT, Abuja. South Africa, United States of America, London, and Malaysia are also chosen to represent IPOB in the Diaspora and survey monkey tool was also used in obtaining information from Diaspora. A structured questionnaire was administered to obtain firsthand information. The questionnaire used the Five-Point Likert Scale (SA, A, UN, D, SD). This was adopted to register the degree of agreement or disagreement to a statement. A Survey Monkey (an online questionnaire) was used to obtain information from Diaspora. An In-depth Interview was used to obtain information from leaders of IPOB both locally and in Diaspora. The collected data were analysed using quantitative data analysis software – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). For the test of the research hypotheses, regression and descriptive statistics were used.

5.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

The demographic data of the IPOB selected members were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics. The number of the questionnaire administered was 500 while 477 copies were retrieved. The demographic data used were gender, age, marital status, educational standard, and nature of employment. In Table 1, the frequency distribution is shown in numbers and percentages. The male respondents made up the majority of the respondents (332). Majority of the respondents fall between the ages of 46 – 60 years (189). Most of the respondents were married (338 or 70.9%). Majority of the respondents have Bachelor's degrees (326 or 68.34%). In their nature of employment, the majority of the respondents were self-employed (206 or 43.2%) while others were unemployed (201 or 42.14%).

Table 1: Demographics of respondents from the selected IPOB members in Nigeria and in diaspora.

Bio-Data Info	Items	IPOB Members in Nigeria						IPOB Members in Diaspora				Total		
		IPOB #1	IPOB #2	IPOB #3	IPOB #4	IPOB #5	IPOB #6	IPOB #7	IPOB #8	IPOB #9	IPOB #10		IPOB #11	
Gender	Male	6	10	5	12	144	15		70	15	16	20	19	332
	Female	4	8	2	6	66	6		22	8	6	9	8	145
	Total	10	18	7	18	210	21		92	23	22	29	27	477
Age Grade	30-45 years	2	4	3	3	61	7		43	6	6	14	12	161
	46-60 years	2	11	2	10	95	7		21	11	10	10	10	189
	61-75 years	5	2	2	5	41	5		20	5	4	5	4	98
	76 years & above	1	1	-	-	13	2		8	1	2	-	1	29

	Total	10	18	7	18	210	21	92	23	22	29	27	477
Marital Status	Single	2	3	1	2	32	5	18	4	5	10	9	91
	Married	7	13	6	13	159	13	66	15	14	16	16	338
	Others	1	2	-	3	19	3	8	4	3	3	2	48
	Total	10	18	7	18	210	21	92	23	22	29	27	477
Highest Education	WASSCE	2	3	1	3	19	2	10	1	2	1	2	46
	Bachelors Deg	5	10	5	13	151	15	55	17	14	21	20	326
	MSc/MBA/Med	3	3	1	1	37	4	21	4	5	5	5	89
	Others	-	2	-	1	3	-	6	1	1	2	-	16
	Total	10	18	7	18	210	21	92	23	22	29	27	477
Nature of Employment	Employed	2	2	1	2	27	5	11	4	4	6	6	70
	Unemployed	3	6	2	5	82	10	48	11	10	11	13	201
	Self-employed	5	10	4	11	101	6	33	8	8	12	8	206
	Total	10	18	7	18	210	21	92	23	22	29	27	477
	Jobless	2	3	2	3	50	4	27	6	6	5	8	116

	Student	1	1	-	1	21	4	10	4	3	5	4	54
	Retiree	-	2	-	1	11	2	11	1	1	1	1	31
	Total	3	6	2	5	82	10	48	11	10	11	13	201
	Paid employee	2	1	1	2	16	3	6	2	3	4	4	44
	Unpaid employee	-	1	-	-	8	1	4	1	1	1	1	18
	Unprotected paid employee	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	1	-	1	1	8
	Total	2	2	1	2	27	5	11	4	4	6	6	70
	Trader	3	4	2	4	33	3	10	3	3	5	3	73
	Artisan	1	3	1	3	31	2	10	2	3	2	2	60
	Farmer	-	1	1	3	27	1	6	1	1	2	1	44
	Religious	-	1			3	-	4	1		1	-	10
	Others	1	1		1	7	-	3	1	1	2	2	19
	Total	5	10	4	11	101	6	33	8	8	12	8	206

Source: Field Survey (2018)

5.2 Test of Hypothesis

H_0 : The supports gained by IPOB both locally and internationally have not significantly influenced political stability in Nigeria.

Table: 2 The Responses of IPOB Members on the Support Gained from Locally and Internationally towards the realization of their Objectives

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	SD
1	Participation in IPOB activities	298 (62.5%)	151 (31.7%)	25 (5.2%)	3 (0.6%)	477 (100%)	3.559	.6243
2	Donations from IPOB members	284 (59.5%)	140 (29.4%)	50 (10.5%)	3 (0.6%)	477 (100%)	3.478	.7056
3	Dissociation of some IPOB public from their activities	129 (27.0%)	138 (28.9%)	130 (27.3%)	80 (16.8%)	477 (100%)	2.662	.5498
4	Compliance with the rules and regulations of IPOB group	320 (67.1%)	125 (26.2%)	28 (5.9%)	4 (0.8%)	477 (100%)	3.595	.6399
5	Regular attendance to IPOB meetings	314 (65.8%)	135 (28.3%)	26 (5.5%)	2 (0.4%)	477 (100%)	3.595	.6130

Source: Field Survey (2018).

Table 2 shows that all items contained in the questionnaire as; participation in IPOB activities, donations from IPOB members, dissociation of some IPOB public from their activities, compliance with the rules and regulations of IPOB group, regular attendance to IPOB meetings have strong affirmation with average mean of 3.559, 3.478, 2.662, 3.595, 3.595 respectively. The table has proved that IPOB group enjoys the support of their people.

Table 3: How the supports for IPOB members both locally and internationally influenced political stability in Nigeria

S/N	Items	IPOB # 1	IPOB # 2	IPOB # 3	IPOB # 4	IPOB # 5	IPOB # 6	IPOB # 7	IPOB # 8	IPOB # 9	IPOB # 10	IPOB # 11	Total
Supports for IPOB members both locally and internationally towards the realization of their objectives													
1	Participation in IPOB activities	3.90	3.83	4.00	3.88	3.44	3.28	3.70	3.82	3.72	3.62	3.11	3.66
2	Donations from IPOB members	3.70	3.66	4.00	3.77	3.34	3.28	3.53	3.82	3.81	3.41	3.44	3.61
3	Dissociation of some IPOB public from their activities	2.40	1.83	2.42	2.05	2.81	3.00	2.42	2.34	2.72	2.37	3.66	2.54
4	Compliance with the rules and regulations of IPOB group	3.60	3.88	3.85	3.72	3.60	3.66	3.58	3.73	3.90	3.41	2.92	3.62
5	Regular attendance to IPOB meetings	3.60	3.61	3.71	3.83	3.61	3.57	3.58	3.78	3.72	3.41	3.18	3.60
Total		3.44	3.36	3.60	3.45	3.36	3.36	3.36	3.50	3.57	3.24	3.26	3.41

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the

		Square	Square	Estimate	
1	.479 ^a	.229	.199	.537353	
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	
Regression	27.873	2	10.541	64.613	
Residual	178.826	474	.163		
Total	140.014	476			
Coefficients					
Parameters	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. (P-value)
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.627	.051		8.726	.000
Local supports for self-agitation	-.202	.073	.341	-7.272	.023
International supports for self-agitation	-.163	.058	.297	-6.827	.005
Predictors: (Constant), Political Consideration (Apparent Sincerity, Interpersonal Influence)					
Dependent: Political Stability					

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The results from the model summary table 4.5.3 revealed the extent to which the variance in the dependent variable (Political stability in Nigeria) is explained by the independent variable (supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB). In this case, the R-squared is .229, which expressed as a percentage equal 22.9%. This connotes that 22.9% of the variance in performance outcome can be predicted by supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB. The adjusted R-squared which identifies the percentage of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables shows .199 (that is 19.9%) variability of the independent variable while the standard error of the estimate indicates .465769 which signifies error term. The Durbin Watson result at 1.792 is within the recommended range (1.5-2.5).

The ANOVA table explains the assessment of the statistical significance of the result. In the table, the statistical significance is 0.00. Therefore, since the P-value is < 0.05, we reject the H0 and accept the H1. This statistically means that we accept the alternate hypothesis which states that supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria. The regression equation from the above table is:

Political stability in Nigeria Predicted = 2.864 + .108* local supports + .108* international supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria. The beta coefficient of 0.479 shows moderate supports gained from the public (local and international) to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria. This was supported by the unstandardized beta coefficient which states that a unit increase in the local and international supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria will lead to a decrease in political stability in Nigeria by 20.2% and 16.3% respectively.

Decision Rule: Reject the Null hypothesis, when the significance value is below 0.05. Do not reject the null hypothesis, when significance value is greater than 0.05.

Decision:

The significance level below 0.05 implies a statistical confidence of above 95%. This implies that responses of government to the agitations for self-determination by IPOB have an effect on political stability in Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) was rejected; while the alternative hypothesis (Ha₁) which says that the local and international supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria are accepted.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings in this study particularly the support IPOB group has gained from the public both locally and in the diaspora and how this support has influenced Nigeria’s political stability.

In the outcome of hypotheses 3 tested, the relationship between supports gained from the public (local and

international members) for self-determination by IPOB and political instability was investigated using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a moderate, positive correlation between the two variables (supports gained from the public and political stability).

The results from the model summary table 4.10 revealed the extent to which the variance in the dependent variable (Political stability in Nigeria) is explained by the independent variable (supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB). In this case, the R-squared is .229, which expressed as a percentage equal 22.9%. This connotes that 22.9% of the variance in performance outcome can be predicted by supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB. The adjusted R-squared which identifies the percentage of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables shows .199 (that is 19.9%) variability of the independent variable while the standard error of the estimate indicates .465769 which signifies error term. The Durbin Watson result at 1.792 is within the recommended range (1.5-2.5).

The ANOVA table explains the assessment of the statistical significance of the result. In the table, the statistical significance is 0.00. Therefore, since the P-value is < 0.05 , we reject the H^0 and accept the H^1 . This statistically means that we accept the alternate hypothesis which states that supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria. The regression equation from the above table is:

Political stability in Nigeria Predicted = $2.864 + .108^* \text{ local supports} + .108^* \text{ international supports}$ gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria

The beta coefficient of 0.479 shows moderate supports gained from the public (local and international) to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria. This was supported by the unstandardized beta co-efficient which states that a unit increase in the local and international supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria will lead to a decrease in political stability in Nigeria by 20.2% and 16.3% respectively.

Decision Rule: Reject the Null hypothesis, when the significance value is below 0.05. Do not reject the null hypothesis, when significance value is greater than 0.05. In conclusion, the significance level below 0.05 implies a statistical confidence of above 95%. This implies that responses of government to the agitations for self-determination by IPOB have an effect on political stability in Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected; while the alternative hypothesis (H_{a1}) which says that the local and international supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria is accepted.

The outcome of the test also aligned with the position of scholars in the reviewed literature. Ojukwu, in the year 2000, in his clarification on the inclusiveness of the minority and their support for Biafran agitations explained that:

Unity has existed between all Biafrans from the time the Civil War was fought, we jointly fought the war. Remember there existed a well-calculated attempt to maintain a balance between the minority and the Igbo in my government, my Chief Secretary came from Akwa Ibom, Ntieyong Akpan, A number of the experienced and good fighters we had in Biafra were from Akwa Ibom and Cross River. We had such field heroes as Nsudoh, Philip Effiong, my deputy and one Archibong (Ezeani, 2013, p: 86).

On the response of Ugochukwu (2018) during the interview when asked about the supporters of IPOB group said that "They have a lot of supporters. I even give them my support. They are my own people and I believe in what they are fighting for. I learnt that they also get support from other countries of the world." It is not uncommon for an agitating group to enjoy the unflinching support of their own people. In the Philippines, the youths have thrown their weight in support of the struggle for political freedom. According to the youths (Siklab Indigenous Youth Network), "Together we unite and strengthen our collective voices as Siklab, the national movement of indigenous youth that aims to strengthen our struggle for land, life, resources and self-determination from the community to the national level," (Indigenous Voices in Asia, 2015). Several scholars from the literature consent with the viewpoint that agitators gain support which strengthens them and also with the tendency of leading to political instability (Akanji, 2012; Bereketeab, 2012; Dursumov, 2012; Frost & Cobb, 1999; Matzek, 2016; Porto, 2003; Tihanyi, 2015; Webster, 2017; Writers, 2011).

A notable political big weight in the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria, Senator Ike Ekweremadu, the Deputy Senate President, also shared his opinion on the secession agitation by pro-Biafran groups and

this was made available in the report of Polycarp (2017):

"There is a great need for a restructured federation where the Igbo or any other person from anywhere in Nigeria will engage in their businesses in whichever part of the country devoid of molestation, discrimination and destruction of his or her life with the most flimsy excuses." In the Senator's submission, "We need to set up a committee for continuous engagements and moderations of IPOB, other pro-Biafran organisations and their leaders to avoid hate speeches and reckless statements that will make us lose our friends and sympathisers."

In support of restructuring, Polycarp (2017) reported that "The governor of Rivers State was in Sokoto to emphasize that the people of Rivers State are rather in support of a restructured Nigeria, not a sovereign state of Biafra. Similarly, the people of Delta state including the Anioma cultural zone will not be part of Biafra." This is evidence of individual opinion that has trailed the issue of pro-Biafra agitation. While these opinions may capture individual proclivities and perceptions of leading politicians in Nigeria regarding the Biafra agitations, the support that IPOB continues to receive from local and Diaspora interests cannot be discountenanced. For instance, the IPOB leadership recorded 70% abidance with the sit-at-home order by IPOB public in the Eastern states (Vanguard, 2018). The support of the IPOB groups in Diaspora has also assisted IPOB in meeting with the United Nations. According to Eleke (2018), "Representatives of IPOB have met with the United Nations over killings of its members in the South-East. IPOB was led by its deputy leader Uche Mefor, accompanied by the DOS-IPOB (Directorate of States of the Indigenous People of Biafra) headed by Chika Edoziem." This type of meetings with international organizations is championed by members in Diaspora and is for the benefit of all as it makes the plight of their people known to the world. Opejobi (2017) in his report availed the position of Professor Pat Utomi, a renowned Political Economist and a former Presidential candidate, on IPOB being called a terrorist organization. He dismissed the declaration by the Nigerian government that the IPOB led by Nnamdi Kanu were terrorists, and affirmed that people have the right to say they have been treated unjustly, and to deny them of their right is turn them to slaves. The renowned Political Economist did not stop at that; he categorically stated, "I have not seen what terror they (IPOB) committed. They are not, I repeat, quote me anywhere, any day, they are not a terrorist organization; that is just a political thing. It does not make sense which way you look at it; it is just a political thing." On the other hand, and has expected, IPOB leaders have thrown their weight behind the agitations of IPOB group. According to one of the leaders:

Yes, it is what will make people live better. The Hausa man and the Oduduwa man have separate values to life. In the whole of Biafran land, people do not desire to shed blood. Biafrans have a different perception of life. In Biafran land, it is about '*Egbe belu Ugo belu, nke si ibe ya ebela nku kwaa ya*' this means the idea of live and let others live which is visibly demonstrated among the Biafrans who place a premium on life. '*Nwanyi ghotu akidi nke ya ma nke nwunye di ya achabeghi, onyebiye ya*' in the real sense, the Biafrans cherish sharing which also shows love for one another. Among the Northerners, one person may desire to be rich while others come there to feed, salute and call him '*Rankaded'e*'. That is totally opposite to what is found in Biafra land. When a man has different values of life and he continues to be your leader, you will continue to be a slave. Biafrans do not want continuous slavery in Nigeria. It is a good reason to fight for the demand for Biafra (Ekwo, 2018).

On the contrary, a report by Godwin (2015) says, "The Igbo Community Association in Kano State has dissociated itself from the activities of IPOB and its leader Nnamdi Kanu." That was the comment of the President-General of the association, Mr. Ebenezer Chima. This information cannot be disputed when there is a better understanding of the Igbo situation in Northern Nigeria, in which case, many Igbo residents in the North are subjected to blistering victimization, vandalization and sudden attacks on their lives and properties. Odey (2009) adds that many Igbo people have been gruesomely murdered in the prime of their lives in the North. For example, Akaluka was slaughtered in Kano in 1994. While such acts might remind the Igbo tribe of its past Biafran war experiences, this fear of the unknown, particularly in many parts in the North where Igbo residents and traders are hosted by their northern neighbors, may explain why some Igbo associations might refrain from publicly throwing their weights behind IPOB agitations and its leadership. If they do that, it might compound their ordeals that they are already facing in the hands of their Northern hosts.

It is also a fact that some elders have not supported pro-Biafran agitations the way they should have done. Nwosu (2000) notes that an umbrella group of all Igbo organizations in Nigeria, Ohanaeze Ndigbo and Odumegwu Ojukwu who led the 1967 secessionist struggle unequivocally denounced and dissociated themselves from MASSOB. In view of these, what then have made these agitations highly attractive? This

means that despite the lack of support from these elders, the agitations are increasingly gaining ground and becoming more popular.

As shown in table 4.14, an inquiry was made about the participation of IPOB members in their own activities. Out of 477 respondents, 298 (62.5%) strongly agreed while 151 (31.7%) agreed. A total of 320 (61.1%) strongly agreed to comply with rules and regulations of the IPOB group while 125 (26.2%) agreed. A larger number of respondents strongly agreed to donations from IPOB members and regular attendance to IPOB meetings. According to the outcome of the responses in Table 4.3.3, the IPOB group has the support of their people, a larger number of the group strongly agreed that they have the support of their people both locally and in Diaspora. In an interview with the former national leader of IPOB Igbokwe, when asked about the proof that the Biafran people were supporting IPOB, he said that IPOB had people that were donating money to the organization; while some donated secretly, there are a large number of people that come out to match and that no one is forced to partake in anything IPOB is doing (Igbokwe, 2018). He also emphasized that all IPOB activities as Radio and Television stations were handled by IPOB and members do financially sponsor it. This support gained, undoubtedly, has helped the agitators to have good structures mapped out for the achievement of self-determination. The outcome of this study implies that IPOB has the support of the Igbo public both locally and in the diaspora. These supports definitely strengthen the agitating group and on the other hand, have effects on Nigeria's political stability.

7. CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to assess whether the support gained by IPOB both locally and internationally influenced political stability in Nigeria. The result of the study shows that supports gained by IPOB have an influence on political stability in the country. The beta coefficient of 0.479 shows that moderate supports gained from the public (local and international) do promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria. This is supported by the unstandardized beta coefficient which states that a unit increase in the local and international supports gained from the public to promote continuous agitations for self-determination by IPOB in Nigeria will lead to a decrease in political stability in Nigeria by 20.2% and 16.3% respectively. This study, therefore, recommends policies of inclusiveness where different groups as IPOB will be part of an entity without seeking for separate support either internally or externally. This will also raise the confidence IPOB with their group and various groups that are engaged in different types of agitations in Nigeria. Finally, the Federal Government should engage more with the South East region to identify the underlying reasons for the secessionist agitations with a view to addressing those grievances. Satisfactory attention should be paid to addressing the governance and structural issues that are at the heart of the renewed agitation in an effort to raise Nigeria's level of political stability.

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