MULTIPLE TAXATION AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF SMES IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

[1]Okeke, Prince Chinedu *PhD.*

[1] Department of Accountancy, Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

The general objective of this study was to ascertain the effect of multiple taxation on the financial performance of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. The survey research design was used. The study population comprised of SMEs in Aba metropolis of Abia State. Convenience sampling method which is a nonprobability sampling technique was used to select the respondents. After data processing, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for the data analysis, while hypotheses in the study were tested with simple linear regression analysis. Findings showed that tax rate and complexities was statistically significant and negatively affects the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. Also, tax compliance cost was a negative and significant factor also influencing the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. Given that the rate of taxation and its complexities have negative effects on the financial performance of SMEs in Abia State, Abia State government should endeavour to reduce the rate of tax charged on businesses within the state especially the SMEs. Also, since tax compliance rate amongst SMEs in Abia State is very poor. There is need for Abia State government through the Abia State Board of Internal Revenue to vigorously educate SMEs on the benefits inherent in paying taxes.

Keywords: Multiple Taxation, Financial Performance, SMEs, Tax Rate and Complexities, Tax Compliance Cost

INTRODUCTION

The activities of small and medium-scale enterprises, particularly in developing nations, have been connected to the recent rapid growth of the global economy. According to a Federal Office of Statistics research, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) make up 97% of all businesses in Nigeria (Ariyo, 2005), and play a significant role in employment and the generation of added value. They are the most significant businesses in the economy even though they are smaller because, when the effects of each individual are added together, they outweigh those of the larger businesses.

It is impossible to overestimate the benefits of small and medium-sized businesses on both social and economic levels. As a result, the expansion and improvement of this sector's performance have a significant impact on general economic growth. About 50% of all jobs in Nigeria are provided by SMEs, which have also been shown to be reliable sources of local capital formation for achieving optimal working capital and capital structuring using distinctive and scientific models like standard magnitude variance and aimed at assessing the financial progress of the business. These are all benefits of the operation and existence of SMEs (Nyong, 2021). Indeed, SMEs have raised the level of living for many individuals, particularly in rural areas. Yet, these little businesses have an extremely high death rate (Zayol, Duenya, & Gberindye, 2018). In Nigeria, 80% of SMEs perish before their fifth anniversary, according to the Small and Medium Businesses Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). Tax-related problems, ranging from heavy tax burdens to various taxes, are among the causes of these premature close-ups.

Ihenyen, Ayodeji, and Benson (2021) define taxes as mandatory government assessments placed on individual income (salaries), corporate earnings, interest, dividends, and commissions. Regardless of whether a tax is direct or indirect, it can encourage or discourage saving and investment. Double taxes are one of the biggest problems SMEs face in Nigeria. When a single sum of money is taxed more than once, frequently by two or more distinct authorities, this is known as multiple taxation (Mwakisha, 2020). The government agencies' arbitrary imposition of fees and levies is at odds with fiscal federalism. Nigeria burdens firms with a large number of levies and taxes, which inevitably drives up the cost of doing business there (Iliya, 2017). In any economy, taxation is anticipated to have a major, beneficial impact on how well SMEs perform. Yet, given the situation in Nigeria, it appears that this is generally untrue. According to Agu, Onwuka, and Aruomah (2019), interactions with the majority of entrepreneurs in Abia State, Nigeria, reveal a significant level of dissatisfaction with the tax system, particularly at the state and local government levels. Even in situations when it is evident that such laws (taxes) are illegal, many business owners are frequently subjected to harassment and intimidation in an effort to coerce them into paying. The extent of corruption in tax administration, assessment, and use has prevented SMEs in Abia State from reaping the advantage that they are legally entitled to as tax payers (Agu, Onwuka, & Aruomah, 2019).

The taxes and levies that are levied against SMEs in Abia State, Nigeria, include market levies, shop levies, infrastructure development levies, signboard and advertisement permit fees, business premises registration, income tax, value added, tenement rate, and business permits (Ubani, Emelogu, Nwankwo, & Aruocha, 2019). The goal of government taxation of enterprises is to promote economic growth across a range of industries. Additionally, it serves as a source of funding for the government, assuring the implementation of various economic policies, and advancing economic wellbeing by fostering an atmosphere that is favourable for business (Faloyin, 2015). Rayler (2017) claims that if the tax structure is not properly tailored to the unique environment conditions, it could increase the burden on tax-paying firms, thus harming the final consumer.

In a broader sense, financial performance relates to how well financial goals are or have been achieved. It is the process of calculating the monetary value of the outcomes of a firm's policies and operations. It is used to assess a company's overall financial health over a certain period of time and may also be compared to other enterprises in the same industry or aggregated across industries or sectors (Zayol, Duenya, & Gberindye, 2018). Every corporate organization, even small and medium-scale enterprises, should strive for sound and efficient financial performance in order to survive in today's fiercely competitive business environment. The monetary evaluation of a company's operations and policies at a certain time is shown in its financial performance. This suggests that financial success is crucial for all organizations, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), whose operations have recently drawn attention and recognition on a global scale (Ogbonna, Onuoha, Ohoku, & Ojeaburu, 2020).

Since SMEs are essential for fostering economic growth in both developed and developing nations, careful consideration must be given to the negative consequences of taxes on their financial performance. It is surprising that little research has been carried out on the detrimental effects of multiple taxations on the financial performance of SMEs in emerging nations like Nigeria. Also, the majority of the studies and literature on the topic are of foreign and western origin, where the dynamics of SMEs' operations differ from those of a developing nation like Nigeria. This necessitates a thorough investigation into

how multiple taxes impact SMEs' financial performance. So, the purpose of this study is to investigate how multiple taxes affect the financial performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Nigeria's Abia State.

Statement of the Problem

One of the biggest problems SMEs face in a nation like Nigeria is the unfavourable relationship between payment of taxes and the capacity to make profits. The operations of SMEs are impacted by high tax rates, multiple taxation, complex tax regulations, the complete lack of proper information or education regarding tax-related issues, a lack of resources, inadequate technological and management skills, environmental concerns, and governmental regulations. Due to these difficulties, there are more small and medium-scale enterprises to close down.

The problem of multiple taxation, which is the most significant issue businesses face in Abia State of Nigeria, is like a worm eating deeply into the profits these SMEs would have ordinarily used for expansion and survival. Because the government does not foster an environment that would allow these SMEs to flourish with the money obtained from the taxes they are forced to pay, the mortality rate of small and medium-sized businesses in Abia State is quite high. Researchers have made some attempts to ascertain how multiple taxation affect businesses in Nigeria. Most of these studies, however, have concentrated on states other than Abia State except a few such as the ones by Agu, Onwuka, & Aruomah, (2019) and Ubani, Emelogu, Nwankwo, & Aruocha (2019). As a result, this study determined the long-ignored impact of multiple taxation on SMEs' financial performance in Abia State of Nigeria.

Objective of the study

The general objective of this study was to ascertain the effect of multiple taxation on the financial performance of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria.

Specifically, the aims were to;
i.   Examine the effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria;
ii. Determine the effect of tax compliance cost on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria.

Research questions

The study provided answers to the following research questions
i.   What is the effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria?
ii. What is the effect of tax compliance cost on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study

HO$_1$:   There is no significant effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria

HO$_2$:   There is no significant effect of tax compliance cost on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section addressed conceptual issues, theoretical framework and reviews of related empirical works.

Conceptual Review

Concept Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

Small and Medium Enterprises are small firms that are categorized as Micro, Small and Medium or Micro Enterprises (MSMEs) or Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs). Several factors are used to distinguish between these businesses, including the number of employees, ownership structure, turnover, total assets, capital base, legal form, and the type of activity the business engages in (Jousten, 2017). Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are companies with a maximum asset base of 500 million Naira, excluding land and working capital, and with a workforce size of between ten (10) and 300 employees (Bala, Mustapha, & Bassey, 2021). In the meantime, the Finance Act (2020) defines small firms for the purposes of corporation tax liability as organizations with annual gross revenues of N25 million (61,000 USD) or less, and medium-sized organizations as organizations with annual gross revenues of N25 million (61,000 USD) and N100 million (244,000 USD).

Street vendors must be completely incorporated into any definition of the SMEs sector. The broader definition of this group always includes this group of entrepreneurs; otherwise, it is not complete. It is noteworthy to say that in some towns, small and medium-sized businesses and street vendors coexist in the same locations (Ufua, et al., 2020). According to Ogechukwu (2011), SMEs significantly progress a nation by creating new jobs, which have a solid track record of employment and are recognized as major drivers of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in most nations.

According to the 2013 Enterprise Baseline Survey, there are 37,067,416 MSMEs, including 36,994,578 micro, 68,168 small, and 4,670 medium-sized businesses. As of December 2013, 59,741,211 people were employed by Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Businesses (MSMEs) in Nigeria, making up 84.02% of the overall labour force (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2013). Previous research backed up that claim, indicating that SMEs contribute around 80% of the global population's income and act as catalysts for economic development, poverty reduction, national growth, and the creation of jobs (Kadiri, 2012; Kamunge, Njeru, & Tirimba, 2014).

Multiple Taxation

Multiple Taxation (MT) is the term used to describe forced and illegal payments that are typically collected by local and state governments without being allowed by law (Abiola, 2012). It is a situation in which two (2) or more levels of government pressure a tax payer to pay the same or identical taxes in an effort to increase their revenue base (Folayin, 2015). According to Abiola (2016), multiple taxation occurs when the same branch of government levies two or more taxes on the same source of revenue. Adum (2018) defined multiple taxation as a situation in which a person's or a corporate body's wealth is taxed more than once.

When an organization or an individual is subjected to multiple taxation, it means that the same profit or revenue that is subject to tax in Nigeria has been submitted to tax by another tax authority in Nigeria or another country outside of Nigeria (Osita, 2004). In such circumstances, relief is typically given to that tax payer for the earlier tax that was paid or for which he may be obligated. With the intention of preventing such multiple taxation or offering relief as necessary under the circumstances, specific provisions are developed. This claim was supported by Nwokoro (2013), who claimed that multiple taxation poses a serious danger to investment and growth.

Anyanwu (1997) asserted that in order to generate enough income for the government, Nigerian tax officials have concentrated on manipulating tax rates and tax bases. As a result, tax authorities have had to impose various taxes and levies on manufacturing entities. These various taxes, which would ordinarily go under one type of tax, are broken into numerous types. Multiple taxation is more prevalent at the local government level, according to Duru (2013), Oseni (2014), and Ipaye (2012). Examples include; radio levy, wagon levy, generator levy, tenement rate, etc. Most of these taxes are not recognized by the law. This claim was supported by Nwokoro (2013), who claimed that various taxes pose a serious danger to investment and growth. He further contended that the difficult tax environment in the telecommunications sector causes output from investment to be inversely proportionate to input.

Tomlin (2018) reports that economists believe that the resources that smaller businesses devote to tax compliance may instead be utilised for reinvestment, promoting future growth. So, there is a perception that taxes and a complicated tax system place an excessive burden on smaller enterprises. Vasak (2018) stated that small taxpayers face discrimination under the traditional tax system because both small and large businesses must meet the same compliance standards, incur the same compliance costs, and pay the same tax rates. The profit margin of small businesses is increased by lowering compliance expenses and tax rates. Since the streamlined regulations for a micro business have traditionally decreased the size of the shadow economy and the number of non-compliant registered taxpayers, it also boosts the government's tax collection.

Tax compliance is made unduly burdensome by an overly complex regulatory framework and tax regime in its administration and enforcement, which has a detrimental impact on the growth of SMEs as they are tempted to change into forms that offer a lower tax burden or no tax burden at all (Masato, 2019). This leads to a tax system that imposes high costs on society. A badly implemented tax system also results in low efficiency, high collection costs, taxpayer and staff time waste, low tax receipt amounts, and a divergence from the best use of resources (Farzbod, 2010).

Tax Rate and Complexities and SMEs Performance

Tax rates imposed on SMEs have an impact on the company's expansion. Increased tax rates and complicated tax laws have a detrimental effect on SMEs' financial performance and development as well as new business creation. Due to high cost of manufacturing caused by these high tax rates, SMEs are forced to raise the prices of their goods and services (Graham & Mills, 2008). The choice of organizational type, investment decisions, and financing decisions are all impacted by corporate tax. Entrepreneurs may be encouraged to register their enterprises by corporate tax rates that are lower than the top marginal rate of personal income tax and by rules that allow personal taxation to be postponed through the reinvestment of profits (Graham & Mills, 2008). All other factors being equal, a decrease in corporate tax encourages more enterprises who are not registered because they are concerned about paying taxes to incorporate. In many different countries, reduced tax rates are the result of governments' efforts to increase the competitiveness of SMEs (Gordon, 1963). They implement a variety of taxes to safeguard developing sectors and promote fair competition among SMEs. According to Loo et al. (2012), equity considerations (SMEs make lesser earnings) and efficiency aims frequently drive these actions (SMEs are exposed to market failures, e.g. reduced access to financing, necessitating government policy).

Tax Compliance Cost and SMEs Performance

Tax compliance cost has been a hot topic among academics, government policymakers, and corporate entities. According to Ameyaw, Addai, Ashalley, and Quaye (2015), the cost of paying taxes is one of the three elements that make up the social cost of taxation. According to them, these expenses represent the expenditures suffered by society as taxpaying citizens' purchasing power is transferred to the government. There are three types of compliance costs: time spent, monetary costs, and psychological costs. The total time spent includes internal staff costs and external costs (fees paid to external accountants and other advisors). These compliance expenditures are outside the purview of the business organizations' management (Pope & Abdul-Jabbar, 2008).

Empirical antecedents demonstrated that SMEs bear a disproportionate burden of regulatory burden. Pope and Abdul-Jabbar (2008) noted that SMEs have few resources and lack knowledge to adhere to a variety of complex regulations (Atawodi & Ojeka, 2012). However, according to Eichfelder and Vaillancourt (2014), a high tax compliance cost might encourage tax evasion and fraud as well as limit investment by lowering the competitiveness of the nation in terms of tax attractiveness. The problem of non-compliance is partly attributed to the prohibitive of tax compliance cost. This could take the form of SMEs refusing to submit their tax returns in full or within the appropriate timeframe, understating their income, inflating their deductions, or failing to pay assessed tax by the due dates (James & Edwards, 2010).

Financial Performance

Financial performance can be summed up as an organization's capacity to achieve its financial goals. The ability of a company to make a profit, raise the value of invested capital, and simultaneously pay off its short- and long-term liabilities is a key indicator of its financial performance. Financial performance, in a broader sense, refers to the extent to which financial goals are being or have been achieved. It is the process of calculating the monetary value of the outcomes of a firm's policies and operations. It is used to assess a company's overall financial standing over a certain time period and may also be used to compare similar companies within the same industry or to aggregate industries or sectors. Financial performance is a measure of how effectively a company can utilise resources from its main line of business and generate income. Analysis of the company's production and productivity performance (total business performance), profitability performance, liquidity performance, working capital performance, fixed asset performance, fund flow performance, and social performance are all included in the measurement of financial performance. But for this analysis, the profitability performance is used.

The management of the company and other stakeholders utilize financial performance indicators, particularly financial ratio analysis, to determine the financial stability and growth potential of the company. The main foundation for evaluating financial performance is financial analysis. In order to measure organizational performance, different researchers have employed various metrics, such as net income, sales (Dollinger, 1984), return on investments (ROI), return on sales (ROS), and a combination of ROI and ROS (Pegels and Yang, 2000), return on assets (ROA) (Birley and Wiersema, 2000), market to book value of the equity, profitability, and market share/growth (Entrialgo, Fernandez & Vazquez, 2000).

Theoretical Review

Ability to Pay Theory

This theory was propounded by Swiss philosopher Jean (1712-1778), the French political economist Say (1767-1832), and the English economist Mill (1806-1873). The theory which is the foundation of a progressive tax where the tax rate rises in proportion to an increase in the taxable amount, contends that taxes should be assessed in accordance with a person's income or ability to pay (Jones, 2011). For instance, if person A has a higher taxable capacity than person B, the former should be required to pay higher taxes than the latter. It would seem that justice could be served if taxes were assessed based on the aforementioned premise. Nevertheless, the problems do not stop here. It is a reality that when this idea is used, problems start to arise.

Henderson (2004) claimed that the issue stems from the concept of ability to pay. The precise definition of a person's capacity to pay is a subject of debate among economists. This idea, which has been widely adopted in industrial economies, states that the fairest tax system is one in which individuals with higher incomes or wealth who can afford to pay more in taxes should be taxed at a higher rate than those with lower individual income taxes. This theory's central assumption is that, in order to uphold the ideals of fairness and equality, the burden of taxation should be solely borne by society's citizens, and that these principles demand that the tax burden be distributed in accordance with each person's individual capacity to pay. According to the ability-to-pay philosophy of taxes, turnover tax payers should pay voluntarily and in accordance with their capability to pay (Chigbu, Eze and Ebimobowei, 2012).

Developing nations like Nigeria frequently struggle to generate domestic cash for growth. Researchers have suggested that one approach to resolving this problem is to expand the tax base. This is because it is necessary to build infrastructure, generate employment, lower unemployment, broaden the productive economic sectors, and considerably increase public revenue from non-oil sectors. Using this procedure, tax policy should work to place all taxable adults in a tax bracket with a graduated rate that should ensure that the wealthy pay their fair part while the low-income earners are given incentives to save. With this theory in mind, it can be said that the vast majority of Nigeria's micro and small businesses are located in Abia State, and these businesses require a well-articulated tax policy that controls their sustainability, development, and performance. This is why this theory is particularly relevant to this study.

Optimal Tax Theory

The analysis of the effects of tax reform and the evaluation of both its administrative expenses and its impact on social welfare are critical components of the optimum taxation theory. According to the optimal taxation theory, efforts should be focused on maximizing tax revenue, lowering the cost of tax revenue generation on the side of generating authorities, and preventing multiple taxation on taxpayers. The foundation or premise for understanding how numerous taxes affect SMEs is the optimal tax theory. "Tax reform," here implies a change from a predetermined status quo achieved by the application of suitable tactics, methods, and strategies.

The general theory of tax reform states that if the marginal cost of tax A is greater than the marginal cost of tax B, it will be advantageous to switch taxes at the margin from A to B. In general, a tax reform is advantageous if it lowers tax burdens on taxpayers while boosting revenue and social welfare. When it comes to shadow prices, a tax should be

raised if the change's direct effect on households outweighs the cost of the additional demand it creates at shadow prices. The welfare effects of the general equilibrium adjustments that result from an increase in demand for an item are embodied in the shadow price of that good. Thus, the shadow price is dependent on how the economy reacts (Stern, 1988).

Theory of Business Growth

Many authors have proposed theories regarding business growth. Gibrat's law of proportionate effect (LPE), according to Elhiraika and Nkurunziza (2007), is the most established and widely applied theory. Gibrat asserts that a firm's growth rate is independent of its size at the outset. Given that they generate more employment than small businesses, it follows that large corporations are preferred in the context of private sector development. Jovanovich (1982), on the other hand, claimed that younger enterprises learn through time, which aids them in improving their performance as they gain market expertise.

This concept states that younger businesses expand more quickly than older ones. Jovanovich further concluded that small organizations expand more quickly than large ones given that newer firms are often smaller than older ones (businesses) for the reasons already mentioned. Little businesses will eventually grow to be as big as any other longer organizations in the same sector through a convergence process. On the other hand, Olawale and Garire (2010) stated that a new small firm goes through a few growth stages as it starts out and expands. He added existence, survival, success, takeoff, and resource maturity to the list of stages of growth.

The Churchill Lewis model provides insight into the dynamics of SMEs performance, including the distinctive characteristics, problems, and requirements of growing SMEs, and explains the business growth process among SMEs. While the precise point in time at which a startup venture transforms into a new business has not yet been theoretically determined, it is important to note that each stage of development as a different set of factors is critical to the firm's survival and performance. Yet, in the five phases of small business growth, a company that has successfully accomplished the transition to stage two companies might be compared to the perfect business survival.

Empirical Review

Bala, Mustapha and Bassey (2021) examined the effect of Taxation on the Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study's main objective was to determine how multiple taxation, tax compliance costs, and tax rates affected SMEs' net profit margins in Taraba State. The study's foundation was the business growth theory. For the study, a survey design was chosen, and 103 SMEs operators were given copies of the questionnaire, 89 of which were successfully returned. Descriptive statistics were used to show the data, and Godfrey serial correlation test, skewness and kurtosis, and Pearson correlation were used for diagnostic testing. The hypotheses were tested using ordinary least squares regression (OLS). The study's findings revealed that multiple taxation in Taraba State has significant impact on the performance of SMEs, tax compliance costs have a negative and insignificant impact on SMEs performance. The study recommended among other things, that the government ease the tax burden on SMEs. The Taraba State Board of Internal Revenue Services needs to keep an eye on tax collectors and make sure that SMEs are not subjected to multiple taxes. To prevent duplicity, this should be done by reviewing all taxes collected by the state and local governments. In order to

lower the cost of tax compliance for SMEs, particularly in the form of consultation, the Taraba State Board of Internal Revenue Services should introduce simpler and more practical ways of paying taxes as well as increase SMEs' awareness of tax concerns. Legislative action should be taken to lower tax rates because performance suffers when tax rates rise. Tax authorities such as the Board of Internal Revenue Services should see to it that SMEs are taxed in accordance with their capability for profit.

Mavis (2020) examined the effects of taxation on the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in the Central Region, Ghana. A descriptive survey approach was used to examine 310 SMEs in Ghana's Central Region. Respondents selected from the investigated SMEs were asked to complete a structured questionnaire to provide data. The study used multiple linear regression in order to determine the relative significance of each of the five explanatory variables - tax rate and complexity, cost of tax compliance, tax policy, size of firm, and business experience with regard to the growth of SMEs. The study discovered a significant positive association between the business experience and tax compliance costs and growth of SMEs. Tax rate and complexity, and tax policy all have a statistically significant negative impact on the growth of SMEs. The study suggested that the government make an effort to lower the rate of tax levied against enterprises, particularly SMEs. It was also suggested that tax laws aimed at the private sector be considerate to SMEs.

Oporiopo and Tamarauebi (2021)) examined the multiplicity of taxation in Nigeria and its controversy. Simple percentage and z-test (SPSS window output) statistical methods were used in the research to draw general conclusions about the issue surrounding the Nigerian tax system. It was discovered that there is disagreement around Nigeria's tax system. Also, every tax and levies that is collected is not on the list of permitted taxes. The Joint Tax Board (JTB) should inform taxpayers and potential investors about the taxes and levies included in the authorized list of collections, according to the suggestions made. The Revenue Allocation Formula should also be examined.

Ubani, Emelogu, Nwankwo, & Aruocha (2019) examined the effect of multiple taxes on the performance of small-scale leather enterprises in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. Eighty (80) respondents were chosen using a multistage sampling technique, which includes 40 small-scale leather business owners from Ariaria International Market and 40 small-scale leather business owners from Ahia Ohuru in Aba. Primary sources were used to collect the data, which was then analyzed using percentages, averages, and regression. The findings showed that the respondents' total mean score of 3.25 was higher than the decision mean score of 3.00, indicating that multiple taxation had an impact on the investment decisions of small-scale business owners in the research area. With a mean of 3.64, multiple taxes had the greatest influence on the size of the leather industry, according to the business owners' perceptions of how multiple taxation affected their investment choices. The study also found that the performance and profitability of the small-scale leather business owners in the study area are impacted by multiple taxation. In light of this finding, the study made several recommendations, including that the government make deliberate efforts to define specific taxes intended for small-scale entrepreneurs, as doing so will prevent the three tiers of government from collecting taxes of the same kind from a specific small-scale enterprise.

Agunuwa and Johnson-Itabita (2021) assessed the effect of taxation on the profitability of businesses in Nigeria. The main goal was to discover how business

profitability was impacted by major tax components in Nigeria. The investigation was conducted between 1994 and 2020. The Granger causality test and the Co-integration test were applied. The Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) unit root test results showed that once the first differencing was taken at the 1% level of significance, all the variables became stationary. A long-term link between the variables was found by the Johansen Co-integration test. The Value Added Tax (VAT), Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT), and Company Income Tax (CIT) all have a positive and significant effect on business profitability, based on the results from Parsimonious Error Correction Model (ECM). According to the ECM, the speed of adjustment was acceptable. Based on these conclusions, the paper suggested, among other things, a distribution of the tax net revenue that should be effectively used to assist an increase in business profitability.

David (2020) examined the effects of multiple taxation on the survival of Businesses in Grand Cape mount county, Republic of Liberia. A survey research design with a population of 50 was used for the study. Data were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire with a sample size of 74 participants. The collected data was statistically evaluated using simple percentages, and ANOVA was used to test the study hypotheses. The results showed that various taxes have a negative impact on a business' ability to survive, and there is a significant association between a business' size and its capacity to pay taxes. The study so advised that the Liberian government implement consistent tax policies that will encourage the growth of enterprises in Grand Cape Mount County and that the government should take into account the size of businesses when establishing tax laws.

Tabet and Onyeukwu (2019) examined the impact of multiple- taxation on small and medium scale enterprise financial performance in Abuja, Nigeria. With a population of 415 respondents and a sample size of 200 according to the RAOSOFT Sample Size Calculator, the study surveyed fifteen (15) carefully chosen SMEs in Abuja metropolis, specifically the AMAC area. There were 200 copies of the questionnaire distributed in total. One hundred seventy-eight (178) copies of the questionnaire (89% of the total) were correctly filled out and used for the study. ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to test the study hypotheses, with a 5% level of significance. The majority of respondents strongly agreed with all of the questions posed on the effects of multiple taxation and disproportionate multiple taxation on the financial performance of SMEs in Abuja, according to an analysis of the data. The study found a significant relationship between multiple taxation and the financial performance of SMEs in Abuja, Nigeria. It also found a significant relationship between excessive multiple taxing methods and the performance of SMEs' budgetary and planning processes. The study suggested that the Nigerian government implement training and awareness programs for tax agents, SMEs owners, and their staff in light of these findings and conclusions. The federal government conducts thorough review of taxes imposed by state and local governments to weed out pointless multiple taxation. Deregulation of disproportionate taxes to be in line with SMEs' earnings. Instead of having multiple, closely related taxes due at the same time, all taxes could be combined into one lump sum and paid directly to a designated government account in relation to income. From there, the tax authorities could distribute the money according to an agreed-upon sharing ratio to different government coffers.

Nnam, Maduabuchi, Igwe, Okeke and Chukwunwike (2022) examined the effect of taxation/taxing practices on the growth of SMEs with a specific focus on whether 'multiple payment obligations placed on SMEs have significant implications on their profitability, investment decisions, and cash flows. The research design used in the study was survey

approach. To test the hypotheses, regression analysis and chi-square were used. The chi-square and regression analysis findings showed that tax policies had a significant impact on the profitability and investment decisions of SMEs. On the other hand, the regression analysis found a significant correlation between taxes and the cash flow of SMEs, although chi-square test demonstrated a non-significant effect of taxation on cash flow. This inconsistency might be explained by respondents' biases in their responses to some survey questions. In order to encourage the growth and expansion of SMEs and the economy as a whole, the study advised the government to enhance the tax incentives already offered, upgrade the infrastructure, and implement tax policies based on an individual's ability to pay rather than multiple payments from SMEs' owners.

Christopher (2021) studied the effect of multiple taxation on the going concern status of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Calabar, Nigeria. The study examined how multiple taxes affected SMEs' ability to survive. The blueprint which produced data after the primary event was completed, was used in the study. A judgmental sample size of eight SMEs was determined by the researcher from the population of thirty SMEs from which the secondary data for the study were drawn. Multiple regression was used to quantitatively examine this data. Results showed that tenement rate has no significant impact on SMEs' going concern status, that refuse disposal has no significant impact on SMEs' going concern status, that business permit fees have little to no significant impact on SMEs' going concern status, that sign post/advertisement fees have little bearing on SMEs' going concern status, and that the development levy has no significant impact on SMEs' going concern status. Based on the findings of the inquiry, suggestions were made in an effort to persuade the government to take into account and lower the amount of the various levies imposed on SMEs, as these hinder their profitability and capacity to continue operating.

Roman, Marcu, Rusu, Doacˇa, and Siriteanu (2023) conducted a study on the topic "Tax payment and the performance of SMEs: A longitudinal analysis on EU Countries". The study's primary goal was to examine the relationship between SMEs' tax payments and performance. A 14-year period from 2008 to 2021 served as the analyses' study period. The 27 nations that make up the European Union were included in the sample under analysis. The researchers tested the link using panel data methods, taking into account two indicators that evaluate SME performance as dependent variables and indicators that evaluate business tax payments as independent variables. They made use of clusters of countries for a more thorough study. The major findings of their study demonstrated that SMEs perceive taxes as barriers to performance improvement. Also, the relationship between taxes and the performance of SMEs is dependent on the intricacies of the nation's economy.

Zayol, Duenya, and Gberindye (2018) ascertained the effect of multiple taxation on financial performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Benue State. From the study's population of 816, a sample of 268 respondents was obtained using the Taro Yamane formula with a 5% margin of error. The study used a survey methodology with a questionnaire. Data analysis in the study was carried out through the use of multiple regression. According to the results of the study, SMEs' financial performance is significantly affected by the duplication of market taxes, development levies, and company premises registration fees, which also negatively impacts their profitability. Therefore, the study recommended that the government should prevent touts' efforts to collect unlawful taxes from SMEs. It also urges the government to stop collecting comparable taxes under various names and to combine all taxes of this kind into a single tax. Last but not least, the

government should make sure that only the legal minimum is collected in taxes and that each tax has a clear jurisdiction.

METHODOLOGY
Research Design

The survey research design was used because of the nature of this study. This kind of study entails direct observation of or data collection from the population when sufficient information is not present in records, files, or other sources. It is a crucial tool when assembling data regarding a certain social issue (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). Also, the survey method is useful for gaining descriptions, opinions, and attitudes as well as cause and effect linkages (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of SMEs in Aba metropolis of Abia State, specifically those that operate provision stores, food vendors, spare parts dealers, fruits sellers, publishers, tailors, engineering, mechanical and electrical services, carpentry shops, communication services, and hair salons.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample frame for the survey included SMEs in Aba metropolis of Abia State. For the purpose of this research, convenience sampling method which is a nonprobability sampling technique was used to select the respondents. This method was chosen because it was difficult to obtain a sampling frame for SMEs in Aba metropolis of Abia State. In addition, convenience sampling provides easy access to the respondents. Based on this, a sample size of 200 from these SME operators in Aba, Abia State was randomly considered.

Research Instrument

The main research instrument in the study was a questionnaire that was independently created. The structured questionnaire had a choice of answers that were provided by the researcher and it was closed-ended. Two sections made up the questionnaire. The Section 'A' of the questionnaire asked biographical questions on the respondent's age, gender, greatest level of education, and number of years in business. The questionnaire's Section 'B' featured statement items on multiple taxation and financial performance. Likert scales (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) were used to measure the scales in section "B". The statement items on the study variables were modified from previous researches in the body of literature.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The researchers utilized content validity to test the validity of the research instrument. A statistician and experts in the relevant fields reviewed the research instrument's validity to ensure that the set questions were effective in eliciting the desired responses. On three constructs, a reliability analysis was done. According to Everitt and Skrondal (2000), Cronbach's alpha can be used as a measure of the internal consistency of a set of measurements (construct reliability). The three constructs' internal consistency was extremely reliable. Both formative and reflective measurements/indicators were used in the current study. A Cronbach alpha of 0.7 was considered acceptable as a good indication of reliability (Ryu and Jang, 2008).

Ethical Consideration in Research

The researchers took necessary actions to ensure that the study was ethically acceptable. Particularly, the respondents' information's confidentiality was guaranteed.

Also, respondents' anonymity was protected. In keeping with this, the researchers gave respondents specific instructions to avoid writing their names on the survey. Finally, it was made clear to the respondents that taking part in the survey was optional.

Data Analysis

Data collected were transformed into more suitable format for analysis. After data processing, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for the data analysis. To test the hypotheses established in the study, simple linear regression analysis was used.

Model Specification

i. The regression model used in examining the effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria is explicitly stated as follows;

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta x + e \qquad\qquad …………….. (i)$$

where;
y = profitability (captured with 5-point likert scale)
x = tax rate and complexities (captured with 5-point likert scale)
e = error term

ii. The regression model used in determining the effect of tax compliance cost on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria is explicitly stated as follows;

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta x + e \qquad\qquad …………….. (ii)$$

where;
y = profitability (captured with 5-point likert scale)
x = tax compliance cost (captured with 5-point likert scale)
e = error term

ANALYSES OF DATA

Effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria

Table 1: Regression analysis showing the effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria

Coefficients[a]					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		**Standardized Coefficients**		
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**T**	**Sig.**
1 (Constant)	.346	.094		3.681	.000
Tax rate and Complexities	-.437	.062	.623	-7.048	.000
R	.966				
R^2	.871				
F-Statistics	173.329				

Dependent Variable: *Profitability*
Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 4.1 shows the effect tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. From the simple regression analysis table, tax rate and complexities was found to be statistically significant at 1% and negatively related to profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. This implies that an increase in tax rate and complexities will result to a decrease in the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. The R square value of 0.871 shows that 87% of the variation in profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria was accounted for by tax rate and complexities. The other 13% were due to some other factors that were not included in the model.

Similarly, the f-statistics value of 173.329 indicates that the model specification was correct while significant at 1%. Therefore, the null hypothesis one (H0$_1$) which states that there is no significant effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. It can thus be concluded that there is significant effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. This assertion is at the 99% confidence level.

Effect of Tax Compliance Cost on the Profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria

Table 2: Simple Regression Analysis Showing the Effect of Tax Compliance Cost on the Profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria

Coefficients[a]					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		**Standardized Coefficients**		
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**T**	**Sig.**
1 (Constant)	.305	.067		4.552	.000
Tax compliance cost	-.417	.092	.624	-4.533	.000
R	.873				
R^2	.824				
F-Statistics	96.116				

Dependent Variable: Profitability
Source: Field Survey, 2023

In Table 4.2, tax compliance cost was found to be a negative and significant factor influencing the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. Tax compliance cost was significant at 1% probability level and negatively affects c the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. This indicates that the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria decreases with an increase in tax compliance cost. This assertion is at the 99% confidence level. The R Square of 0.824 shows that 82% of the variability observed in the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria was explained by tax compliance cost. The other 18% were due to some other factors that were not included in the model.

The f-statistics of 96.116 which was significant at the 1% level shows that the model has a good fit. Therefore, the null hypothesis one (H0$_1$) which states that there is no significant effect of tax compliance cost on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria is rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. It can thus be concluded that there is significant effect of tax compliance cost on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

The general objective of this study was to ascertain the effect of multiple taxation on financial performance of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. The first regression analysis examined the effect of tax rate and complexities on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. The result showed that tax rate and complexities was statistically significant and negatively affects the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. This result is consistent with that of Mavis (2020), who discovered a statistically significant negative impact of tax rates and complexities on the performance of SMEs. This shows that tax rate and complexities tend to impede the performance of SMEs. The implication is that the government must simplify tax filing procedures and lower tax rates in order to support SMEs in Abia State as a whole. If SMEs are subject to a high tax rate and complicated tax return filing procedures, this will have a negative effect on their ability to expand.

The second regression result showed that tax compliance cost was a negative and significant factor also influencing the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. This shows that high tax compliance cost increases SMEs tax expenses which translated into low

profit and growth of the business. This finding is in line with those of Bala, Mustapha and Bassey (2021) and David (2020), who discovered that tax compliance cost has a negative effect on a firm's financial performance. Similar to this, Tabet and Onyeukwu (2019) have demonstrated a negative impact of disproportionate multiple taxation on the financial performance of SMEs in Abuja.

CONCLUSION

The study ascertained the effect of multiple taxation on financial performance of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria. From results of the analyzed data, it can be concluded that tax rate and complexities have a statistically significant negative effect on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State of Nigeria indicating that high tax rates and complex tax systems negatively impact on the financial performance of SMEs. Similarly, it is also concluded that compliance cost has a statistically significant negative influence on the profitability of SMEs in Abia State, implying that higher costs incurred in complying with taxation and related activities forced SMEs in Abia State to experience negative profitability.

RECOMMENDATION/POLICY IMPLICATION

1. The Abia State government should work to lower the rate of tax levied on enterprises within the state, especially the SMEs, given the detrimental consequences that tax rates and complexities have on the financial performance of SMEs in the state.

2. Due to the extremely low rate of tax compliance among businesses in Abia State, the Abia State government must actively inform SMEs within the State about the advantages of paying taxes through the Abia State Board of Internal Revenue.

References

Abiola, S. (2012). Multiplicity of taxes in Nigeria: Issues problems and solutions. *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 3(17), 229.

Adum, S. O. (2018). Burning issues in Nigeria tax system and tax reforms on revenue generation: Evidence from Rivers State. *International Journal of Finance and Accounting,* 7(2), 36-48.

Agu, G. A., Onwuka, O. O., & Aruomah, O. (2019). Impact of Taxation on the Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. *Archives of Business Research*, 7(SP), 1-15.

Agunuwa, E. V. & Johnson-Itabita, P. (2021). Effect of Taxation on Profitability of Businesses in Nigeria. *African Scholar Journal of Management Science and Entrepreneurship*, 23(7), 295-308

Ameyaw, B., Addai, B., Ashalley, E., & Quaye, I. (2015). The effects of personal income tax evasion on socio-economic development in Ghana: a case study of the informal sector. *Journal of Economics, Management Trade*, 23(2), 1-14.

Anyanwu, J. C. (1997). *Nigeria Public Finance*. Joanee Educational Publishers Ltd, Onitsha.

Ariyo, D. (2005). *Small Firms are the Backbone of the Nigeria Economy*, www.africaeconomicanalysis.org

Atawodi, O. W. & Ojeka, S. (2012). Factors that affect tax compliance among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in North Central Nigeria. *International Journal of Business Management*, 7(12), 34-67

Bala, I. S., Mustapha, T. A. & Bassey, E. (2021). Effect of Taxation on the Performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Taraba State, Nigeria. *TSU-International Journal of Accounting and Finance*, 1(1), 51-65

Baurer, L. I. (2005). *Tax Administrations and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Developing Countries*. Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank.org: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/711511468779448847/pdf/391100Tax admin01 PUBLIC1.pdf

Birley, G. A. & Wiersema, M. F. (2002). New CEOs and the corporate strategic refocusing: how experience and heir apparent influences the use of power. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47 (4).

Chigbu, E. E., Eze, A. L. & Ebimobowei, A. (2012). An empirical study on the causality between economic growth and taxation in Nigeria. *Current Research Journal of Economic Theory*, 4(2), 29-38.

Christopher, E. N. (2021). Effect of Multiple Taxation on the going concern status of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Calabar, Nigeria. *United International Journal for Research & Technology*, 2(7), 72-79

David, L. K. (2020). Effects of multiple taxation on the survival of businesses in grand cape mount county, Republic of Liberia. *International Journal of Research in Marketing Management and Sales*, 2(1), 52-57

Dollinger, M. (1984). Environmental boundary spanning and information processing effects on organizational performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 27, 351-368.

Duru, N. (2013) *JTB, TIN and the fight against multiple taxation*, Thisday July 24, p43, retrieved from www.latestnigeriannews.com//

Eichfelder, S. & Vaillancourt, F. (2014). Tax compliance costs: A review of cost burdens and cost structures, *Arqus discussion paper,* No. 178, Arqus, Berlin.

Elhiraika, A. & Nkurunziza, J. (2007). Facilitating firm entry, growth and survival with special attention to SMEs. *ATPC paper* No. 46. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.

Entrialgo, M., Fernandez, E., & Vazquez, C. J. (2000). Linking entrepreneurship and strategic management: Evidence from Spanish SMEs, *Technovation*.

Faloyin, S. K. (2015). Unveiling the potentials of entrepreneurship. *Contemporary Studies,* 68(6), 273-284

Farzbod, J. (2010). *Investigation of the effective factors in the tax efficiency*. Unpublished master's thesis, Governmental Management Training Center, Tehran.

Ghauri, P. & Gronhaug, K. (2005). *Research Methods in Business Studies: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education Limited, Essex:

Gordon, M. J. (1963). Optimal investment and financing policy. *The Journal of Finance*, 18(2), 264-272.

Graham, J. R., & Mills, L. F. (2008). Using tax return data to simulate corporate marginal tax rates. *Journal of Accounting Economics, Business*, 46(2-3), 366-388.

Ihenyen, J. C., Ayodeji, T. O. & Benson, T. N. J. (2021). Effect of Multiple Taxation on Performance of SMEs in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. *Journal of Accounting and Financial Management*, 7(5), 93-107

Iliya, H. U. (2017). Effect of Multiple Taxation on Performance of Small-Scale Business in Maiduguri Metropolis. *Journal of Management and Corporate Governance*, 9(1), 33-70

James, S., & Edwards, A. (2010). An annotated bibliography of tax compliance and tax compliance costs. *Journal of Taxation,* (22), 1-33.

Jousten, A. (2017). *SMMES and the tax system: what is so different about them*? Retrieved from http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1328415971&Fmt=7&clientId=15443 &RQT=309

Jovanovic, B. (1982). *Selection and the Evolution of Industry*. Econometrica, 50(3), 649- 670

Kadiri, I. B. (2012). Small and medium scale enterprises and employment generation in Nigeria: The role of finance, *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 1(9),79-93.

Loo, E. C., Evans, C., & McKerchar, M. A. (2012). Challenges in understanding the compliance behaviour of taxpayers in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Business Accounting. Finance Research*, 3(2), 2010.

Masato, A. (2019). Financing small and medium enterprises in Asia and the Pacific. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 4 (1), 2-32.

Mavis, D. B. (2020). *Effects of taxation on the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in the Central Region, Ghana.* Dissertation submitted to the Department of Accounting of the School of Business, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

Mwakisha, A. S. (2020). *Effect of multiple taxation on the performance of SME's in Malindi*. A research project submitted to the department of economics, accounting and finance, School of Business of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya.

Nnam, I. J., Maduabuchi, A. F., Igwe, E. L., Okeke, S. E., & Chukwunwike, O. D. (2022). Taxation Practices and the Survival of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). Universal Journal of Accounting and *Finance*, 10(2), 399-410. www.DOI:10.13189/ujaf.2022.100204.

Nwokoro, O. (2013). *Tax burden may slow N979bn investment in network expansion.* Retrieved from http://www.businessdayonline.com /tax-burden-may-slow-n979bn-investment-in-n on Thursday October 31, 2013

Nyong, C. E. (2021). Effect of Multiple Taxation on the going concern status of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Calabar, Nigeria. *United International Journal for Research & Technology*, 2(7),

Oboh, T. & Dabor, E. L. (2020). Multiple Taxation and SMEs: The Nigerian Experience. International Journal of Hospitality, Leisure and *Tourism*. 4(1&2), 37-44

Ogbonna, G. N., Onuoha, T. E., Ohoku, S. C., & Ojeaburu, F. (2020). Taxation and Financial Performance of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) In Port Harcourt. *University of Port Harcourt Journal of Accounting and Business,* 7(1), 1-27,

Ogechukwu, A. (2011). The role of small-scale industry in Nigeria. *Universal Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 23-41.

Olawale, F., & Garire, O. (2010). Obstacles to the growth of New SMEs in South Africa: A Principal Component Analysis Approach. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(5), 729-738.

Oporiopo, M. G. & Tamarauebi, O. C. (2021). Multiplicity of Taxation in Nigeria and Its Controversy. *International Journal of Innovative Finance and Economics Research*, 9(2),1-12

Oseni, M. (2014). Multiple Taxation as a Bane of Business Development in Nigeria. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. 3(1), 121- 127.

Osita, A. (2004). *Taxation and Tax Management in Nigeria*. Meridian Association, 36 Zik Avenue, Uwani, Enugu

Pandey, P. & Pandey, M. M. (2015). *Research Methodology: tools and techniques*. Bridge Center, Romania.

Pegels, C.C. & Yang, B. (2000). The impact of managerial characteristics on strategic assets management capability. Team performance Management. *An International Journal*, 6(5/6), 97-106

Pope, J., & Abdul-Jabbar, H. (2008). Small and medium-sized enterprises and tax compliance burden in Malaysia: Issues and challenges for tax administration. *Small Enterprise Research*, 16(1), 47-60.

Rayler, O. M. (2017). *Effect of taxation on performance of micro, small and medium enterprises in Migori County, Kenya*. A research project submitted to the School of Business and Economics Maseno University, Kenya.

Roman, T., Marcu, N., Rusu, V. D., Doacˇa, E. M., & Siriteanu, A. A. (2023). Tax Payment and the Performance of SMEs: A Longitudinal Analysis on EU Countries. *Sustainability*, 15, 927. www.doi.org/10.3390/su15020927

Tabet, R. & Onyeukwu, P. E. (2019). Multiple Taxation and Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) Financial Performance in Abuja, Nigeria. *World Journal of Innovative Research*, 6(2), 65-82

Tomlin, M. (2018). Strengthening SMEs and entrepreneurship for productivity and inclusive growth. *SME Ministerial Conference* (pp. 12-28). Mexico City: OECD.

Ubani, E. C., Emelogu, L. C., Nwankwo. D. O. & Aruocha, N. O. (2019). Effect of Multiple Taxes on the Performance of Small-Scale Leather Enterprises in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria. *International Academy Journal of Africa Development*, 7(2), 36-46,

Ufua, D. U., Olujobi, O. J., Ogbari, M. E., Joseph A. Dada, J. A. & Edafe, O. D. (2020). Operations of Small and Medium Enterprises and the legal system in Nigeria. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 7(94) https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00583-y

Vasak, S. (2018). *Small, medium, and large enterprises*. USAID Business Climate Reform. Retrieved from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADQ675.pdf

Zayol, P. I., Duenya, I. M., & Gberindye, C. A. (2018). Effect of Multiple Taxation on The Financial Performance of SMEs In Benue State. *Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences,* 6(2), 265-273