

THE IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM, GOVERNANCE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA

Ohazuruike Kennedy¹ & Elechi, Felix Aja²

¹Department of Political Science and Diplomacy, Nile University, Abuja.

¹Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

Abstract

*Entrepreneurial development has helped in shaping the economy of most of the advanced and developed nations for centuries. In recent times, the entrepreneurial performance of the Igbo people of Nigeria has been described as naturally enterprising, ingenious and outstanding. **The Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) is an enduring practice by the Igbos in Nigeria. It is popularly described as the biggest and most enduring business incubator in the world.** It is an indigenous model of job and wealth creation practiced by the Igbos. The Igbo entrepreneurs, mostly through the IAS have successfully established businesses that are not only bringing heavy returns on investment to them, but have also made life easy for the Nigerian people particularly in the areas of transportation, trading, electronics, and so on despite the harsh economic and political environment. The paper examined nexus between the IAS and Entrepreneurial development in Southeast Nigeria with special focus on the role of government of the five Eastern States. The study is exploratory and documentary in nature with qualitative descriptive method used in our analysis. Anchoring our discourse on the theory of the Developmental State, findings amongst others revealed that; harsh economic environment, failed policies by the government, high and multiple taxations by different tiers of government and their agencies, have all contributed in obstructing entrepreneurial development; also high level of insecurity in the country such as kidnapping, terrorism / insurgency, financial fraud among others have equally affecting the people who are involved in the IAS and entrepreneurial development. However, the paper recommends amongst others that; there is need for the government to go into partnership agreement with these entrepreneurs through the establishment of a trust fund which will serve as start-up capital for the newly graduated entrepreneurs from the IAS. There is also the need for the government to involve other critical stakeholders both in the economic and political environment to help salvage the waning IAS and revitalized entrepreneurial development.*

Keywords: Igbo Apprenticeship System, Governance Entrepreneurial Development, Developmental State

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurial development has helped in shaping the economy of most of the advanced and developed nations for centuries. One of the major ways of gaining these entrepreneurial skills and knowledge is through an apprenticeship system. Apprenticeship has been an age old tradition and system of inculcating practical and theoretical business and professional skills into an applicant (Anigbogu, Onwuteaka & Okoli, 2019). According to Akande (n.d), apprenticeship may be considered as a system of learning whereby an individual learns a professional skill in a practical way through a structured program of on-the-job training. It usually involves acquiring knowledge, mechanical skills and the development of an attitude or discipline for a particular job. Apprenticeship is also described as a combination of on-the-job training and related technical instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a skilled occupation, craft or trade (Orogbo, Onyeizugbe & Onuzulike-Chukwuemeka, 2021).

In recent times, the entrepreneurial performance of the Igbo people of Nigeria has been described as naturally enterprising, ingenious and outstanding. The Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) is an enduring practice by the Igbos in Nigeria. It is popularly described as the biggest and most enduring business incubator in the world. It is an indigenous model of job and wealth creation practiced by the Igbos. The IAS is arguably one of the driving forces underlying entrepreneurial engagement and success in Igboland in particular, Nigeria and West African sub region in general (Brem & Wolfram, 2014;). This is so because the IAS is embedded in the culture and value system of the Igbos society where it is developed (Agozino & Anyanike, 2007; Adeola, 2020; Amaechi, Iwara, Njoku, Raselekoane & Thobejane, 2021). The IAS is not just for business ventures, but it is also one of the leading carriers of the society's cultural traits and traditional value systems (Amaechi, 2020). Hence, it possesses ideological and social imperatives for entrepreneurial engagement and business success of the Igbos (Amaechi, et al., 2021).

The Igbo entrepreneurs, mostly through the IAS have successfully established businesses that are not only bringing heavy returns on investment to them, but have also made life easy for the Nigerian people particularly in the areas of transportation, trading, electronics, and so on despite the harsh economic and political environment in Nigeria. The impacts of government policies on developed and developing economies cannot be underestimated. For instance, government policies in the United Kingdom (UK) helped Cadbury in the mid 1850s when the taxes on imported cocoa beans were reduced (Fitzgerald, 2005; Cadbury World, 2014). This reduced the production costs, and the previously expensive chocolate products became affordable for the wider population. The United States of America (USA) is a world leader in supporting its entrepreneurs with respect to business formation, expansion and growth. They also finance new businesses through venture capital. This type of financial capital is provided to early-stage, high potential and risk start-up companies. Other countries like Canada and Australia ranked second and third, respectively. These countries' economies rank very high because they understand the impact of entrepreneurship on the growth of their economy, and make deliberate efforts to promote entrepreneurship (Akinyemi & Adejumo, 2018).

In Nigeria, structures and programmes such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), N-Power programme, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and the You-win programme were all designed to promote entrepreneurial activities by facilitating access to funds and other resources needed for SMEs (Oliyide, 2012, cited in Akinyemi & Adejumo, 2018). All these policies and much more are targeted towards promoting entrepreneurship (Akinyemi & Adejumo, 2018). Conspicuously, the IAS is not among the structures and programmes of the Nigerian government policies which are geared towards the promotion of entrepreneurship in Nigeria despite the success stories of the IAS in the Southeast region of the country and beyond.

Deriving from the above, the paper examined the nexus between the IAS and Entrepreneurial development in Southeast Nigeria with special focus on the role of government of the five Eastern States. The study is exploratory and documentary in nature with qualitative descriptive method used in our analysis.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Review

2.1 Governance

Governance has been noted to involve institutional and structural arrangements; decision making processes; policy formulation and implementation capacity; development of personnel; information flows; and the nature and style of leadership within a political system (Alozie, 2017). Coker and George-

Genyi (2014) noted that; governance is a fundamental process through which the lives and dreams of the citizenry are collectively pursued by deliberate and systematic strategies and policies, for the realization of their maximum potentials. Ndefru (2007), cited in Coker and George-Genyi (2014), went on to argue that this process is a combination of responsible leadership and enlightened public participation. For Adejumobi (1995), as quoted in Alozie (2017) governance refers to the efficient management of state institutions and the steering of society and the state towards the realization of collective goals. The support for governance activities stems from the proposition that accountable and capable state institutions are pre-requisites for economic development. This goes a long way to reducing conflicts especially intra state conflicts which have remained a major feature of the contemporary Nigeria state. Government is the structure while the governance is the functioning of the structure. In other words, governance” can be said to be what a “government” does (Orji, 2012). Governments are expected to provide basic public goods including the provision of public infrastructure and protection of lives and properties of the individuals residing in their territory.

2.2 Apprenticeship System

Historically, apprenticeships are the oldest forms of training in the world of work and business. Its emergence predated the medieval era, when guilds, journey men and craftsmen flourished, setting the template for the exploitation of productive forces, and the corresponding relations of production (Nnonyelu & Onyeizugbe, 2020). The apprenticeship system is a training and skill development initiative practiced all over the world and it has long been used to prepare workers to gain occupational skills in many countries (Lerman, 2012 in Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019). Apprenticeship is the process of learning and skill development through enlistment with a master-craftsman or an experienced business person. The system of the young learning on the job from an experienced Master has its roots in traditional African society when blacksmiths, carvers, farmers, native doctors (traditional healers) and others with specific skills took members of the younger generation (usually close relatives) into their households to give them specialized training over a period of years (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019). In line with the argument above, Anigbogu et al., (2019) posits that the apprenticeship system practiced among the Igbo ethnic group is arranged in such a way that the apprentice lives and serves his master for a specified period of years after which the master settles the apprentice by setting him up in business; that is, paying his rent for two or three years and also giving him a cash infusion so that he can venture into business and start trading (Orogbo, et al., 2021). The meaning of apprenticeship abounds depending on the area one approaches it. But the central issue about apprenticeship is that a mentee is learning from the master (Iloanya & Nwanegbo-Ben, 2021).

2.3 The Igbo Apprenticeship System

The Igbo apprenticeship system (IAS) - *imu-olu* which means 'learning work' is of two dimensions; one is *imu-ahia* meaning 'learning trade' and the other is *imu-olu* which means 'learning a skilled work'. The only difference between the two is that, while the former is focused on learning the rudiments of trade and commerce, the latter is focused on acquiring a handicraft. However, the concept, principles and practices of both dimensions are basically the same (Agama & Ohajionu, 2021). The Igbo apprenticeship system is a form of business incubation system originated and practiced by the Igbo ethnic group of Nigeria. It is an indigenous model of job and wealth creation which has been in practice in Igbos land for centuries (Kanu, 2019). Crescent (2019) cited in Kanu (2019) defined the IAS as an unpaid business incubation system

where a trainee learns business from the master for a certain period, usually between 5-8 years, at the end of which the trainee gets financial, technical and social support needed to startup their own business. A more elaborate description of the system is provided by Aleke (2018), he described the IAS as a system whereby an established businessman takes in young boys as apprentices, usually from his hometown and give them an informal, practical business education with the intention to set them up in the same line of business at the completion of the apprenticeship tenure. The IAS has been a proven strategy for job and wealth creation and an effective incubator for entrepreneurs among the Igbo people for decades.

The history of the IAS dates back to almost a century ago. Based on the principle of shared prosperity, the system was designed to build a wealthy society and not a few wealthy individuals among poor masses. This system does not fit well into the conventional economic systems such as capitalism, socialism, or communism; it is simply an economic system of its own, dominated with micro-small-medium enterprises and very few or no conglomerates. In a nutshell, the IAS is a business incubation system whereby an apprentice learns a trade under the guidance and mentorship of a master (usually an established businessman) for several years, at the end of which the master is obligated to set the apprentice up in the same line of business and see to it that he succeeds (Agama & Ohajionu, 2021).

Chriscent and Kanu (2019) noted that Igbos have a culture that frowns at the young roaming the streets in idleness, hence, the apprenticeship system helps to ensure that if a child is unable to go to school for any reason, instead of staying back at home and roaming about, he learns a trade. Most of the teenagers joining the IAS chose the option themselves and, nowadays, unemployment, poverty and school failure are driving more young people to pursue entrepreneurship early. They are discouraged when they see people who have university degrees but are unemployed or poor and financially dependent. They are even more discouraged when they see people with university degrees who are not only unemployed and poor but are also not intellectually sound and thus, cannot contribute financially or intellectually to solving family or societal problems. These sights make boys who do not have sufficient passion for schooling to follow the path of entrepreneurship as soon as possible. Neuwirth (2017) noted that the Igbo multi billionaires such as Innoson, Coscharis, Ibeto and Chikason some of whom did not venture anywhere near the gates of secondary school are products of the Igbo apprenticeship system and control multi-billion dollar empires. No wonder, Kanu (2019) argues that the Igbo apprenticeship system has produced more millionaires and billionaires than the entire university and economic systems in Nigeria have produced (Kanu, 2019).

2.4 Challenges and Limitations of the Igbo Apprenticeship System

The Igbo apprenticeship system has been criticized for not having rigorous apprenticeship selection procedure. Aleke (2018) stated that unlike modern incubation platforms, the Igbo apprenticeship system gives chances without core evaluation and thus, takes in mavericks and rejects sometimes, hoping to give them a future.

In addition, Iwara et al. 2019) were concerned that there is usually no written laws and agreements that may be relied upon for legal action. This is especially in situations when a master refuses to give the apprentice a take-off fund or when an apprentice defrauds his master. Chinweuba and Ezeugwu, (2017) also noted that IAS takes in apprentice in their early ages and so deny them the opportunity of continuing their education.

However, even though the IAS recruit people without thorough assessment, the system throws out apprentice who do not have what it takes to succeed in entrepreneurship within few months of boarding (Iwara et al. 2019) (Kanu, 2019).

With respect to documentation of laws, Kanu (2019), explained that although there are no clearly written laws, the system succeeds because the apprentice is careful, knowing that if he fails or ruins his master's business, his own future would be ruined as his master would not be able to give him a start-up fund for his own business.

Kanu further explained that insincere masters who do not give their apprentice start-up for no just cause run the risks of having their businesses ruined by the apprentice's personal deity, the *Chi*. Kanu also states that such master usually have difficulty in getting another apprentice as the story is told of every master's treatment of his apprentice in his home community from generation to generation. The story is also told in the environment where his business operates. Given these reasons, every master does his best to give take-off fund to his apprentice at the end of his service (Kanu, 2019).

2.5 Entrepreneur

Entrepreneur(s) is a person, individual(s) of group(s) who creates or possesses the skills, capacity, and competences to create wealth through engaging in economic and other commercial activities. Entrepreneurs are known to possess some characteristic traits that make them high achievers and unique. Entrepreneurs are often both owners and employees and a considerable number of them are small business owners or managers. Such people are risk takers, creative, innovative, independent, hardworking and possess other qualities that are driving force behind any entrepreneurial activities in the economy. These entrepreneurial activities significantly affect the economy by building the economic base and providing jobs (Diyoke, 2014). Meredith et al (1996) cited in Mbaegbu and Ekienabor (2018) defined the entrepreneur as any person who has the ability to see and evaluate business opportunity and takes advantage of it even if it means relocating his place of abode in order to actualize his mission and profit from the venture. While entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth, the wealth on the other hand, is created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and career commitment or provide value for some products ((Diyoke, 2014; Anigbogu, Onwuteaka & Okoli, 2019). The entrepreneur is an enterprising personality. He is the organizer of production, the risk taker in investment, and commercialization of inventions (Cantillon 1725 cited in Mbaegbu & Ekienabor, 2018) Say (1803 cited in Mbaegbu & Moghiren-Morgan 2008) also ascribed the management functions of organizing, co-ordination and supervising of production to the entrepreneur.

2.6 Entrepreneurship

The concept entrepreneurship could be seen as a process of setting up a business in which the risk and profit is suffered or enjoyed by an individual or group. That is, it is the willingness, capability and the inclination to develop, organize and run a business enterprise, along with any of its uncertainties in order to make a profit (Iloanya & Nwanegbo-Ben, 2021). According to Entrepreneur Hand Book (2021) as cited in Iloanya and Nwanegbo-Ben (2021), "entrepreneurship refers to the concept of developing and managing a business venture in order to gain profit by taking several risks in the corporate world. Simply put, entrepreneurship is the willingness to start a new business". Entrepreneurship according to Chinwuba & Ezeugwu, (2017) is self-employment of any sort, which bothers on continuously identifying, evaluating and taking advantage of business opportunities and initiating sustainable action to ensure success. It is as well understood as a search for profit based on innovation, creativity and efficient utilization of resources in a consistent cultural pattern, which is filled with vision and enthusiasm and is result driven.

Entrepreneurship is the process of managing one's business enterprise. Whereas entrepreneurs are individuals or persons, entrepreneurship is a process. Entrepreneurship encompasses all the functions: creating an enterprise by innovation or penetrating into new market in order to live by profit (Mbaegbu & Ekienabor, 2018). Entrepreneurship is as old as man, but among scholars the process arguably started with the works of Schumpeter 1947. Schumpeter was probably the first scholar to theorize about entrepreneurship, and the field owed much to his contributions. His fundamental theories are often referred to as Mark I and Mark II. In Mark I, Schumpeter argued that the innovation and technological change of a nation come from the entrepreneurs, or wild spirits. He coined the word *Unternehmergeist*, German for "entrepreneur-spirit", and asserted that the doing of new things or the doing of things that are already being done in a new way stemmed directly from the efforts of entrepreneurs (Fontana, Nuvolari, Shimitzu & Vezzulli, 2012; Schumpeter, 1947; cited in Anigbogu, Onwuteaka & Okoli, 2019).

2.7 Entrepreneurial Development

Entrepreneurship development is practice, where a group of individual or group of people accepting the risk of starting and running of business. It is a means of through which jobs are created and huge benefits are derived by the public (Anifowose, 2015). According to Nichels et al., as cited in Anifowose, (2015), small businesses create 75% of the new jobs in America account for more than 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and more than 80% of Americans find their first job in small scale businesses. Nigeria's experience is not suggestively diverse especially where small scale traders, hawkers, subsistence agricultural farmers, poultry farmers, fish farmers, commercial telephone operators and various other small businesses dominate over 50% of the national economic activities. Entrepreneurship plays critical role by contributing to economic growth, job creation, and national income and hence to national prosperity and competitiveness (Baig, 2007; Abdul & Idris, 2014). As noted by Anigbogu, Onwuteaka and Okoli (2019), entrepreneurial development has helped in shaping the economy of most of the advanced and developed nations for centuries.

2.8 The Nexus between the IAS and Entrepreneurial Development

As an indigenous model, the IAS is built on the Igbo cosmology and value system (Kanu, 2020). Its orientation is, in fact, intertwined with the Igbo cosmological understanding of trade and engagement in entrepreneurship (Agozino & Anyanike, 2007; Amaechi, 2020; Kanu, 2020). Underlying the IAS is a set of indigenous practices such as *Igba-boi* (to serve a master) *Imu-ahia* (to learn a trade), and *igba oso ahia* (sales assistant for mutual benefit). These indigenous practices provide unique business skills and entrepreneurial attitudes, unique business networks, at least for graduates of the Igba-boi system and the initial start-off capital for entrepreneurial activity (Amaechi, et al., 2021).

What makes the Nwaboi Apprenticeship System different, unique and vibrant is that at the end of the training, the apprentice is supported to start his or her own business or workshop (Adekola & Ezekiel, 2013). The system is therefore an important first stage of the entrepreneurship process, by far the most entrenched and vibrant entrepreneurship promotion vehicle in Nigeria, a major contributor to the growth and development of micro, small and medium scale enterprises and a big driver for wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction and thus economic growth and development (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019).

3. Theoretical Framework

We anchored our discourse of the impact of the IAS on entrepreneurial development in the Southeast on the theory of the 'Developmental State' as propounded by Johnson (1982), and advanced by Evans (1989), Leftwich (1998) and Weiss (2000). The theory of the developmental state opined that for any country to attain full economic development, the State must be the architect and also the driving force of the developmental objectives of the country. Chalmers Johnson's pioneering work on the developmental state focused on Japan's rapid and successful post-war reconstruction and industrialization process from 1925 to 1975 (Johnson, 1982). To define the developmental state, Johnson juxtaposes Japan's plan-rational system to a market-rational system on the one hand, as well as, although to a lesser extent, to a command central planning system on the other (Johnson 1982). Johnson's works on the developmental state significantly influenced Anglo-Saxon scholarship, particularly in terms of challenging the dominant views of the neo-liberal approach (Johnson 1985). Among the prominent scholars who advanced Johnson's thesis are Peter Evans (1995), Linda Weiss (2000) and Adrian Leftwich (1998).

The theory of the developmental state is made up of four basic propositions such as; development-oriented political leadership; an autonomous and effective bureaucracy; a production-oriented private sector, and performance-oriented governance. The essentiality of development-orientated political leadership bound together by a powerful economic and political ideology focused on development. The autonomy, capability and effectiveness of the bureaucracy in the East Asian developmental states were outstanding. This is traced back to the presence of bureaucracy in the Weberian tradition which prioritizes meritocratic recruitment, provides promotion incentives, shows rationality and guarantees high levels of prestige and legitimacy to bureaucratic officials (Johnson 1982: 20; 1995; Evans 1997; Evans/Rauch 1999).

Drawing on the work of Johnson (1982), Evans (1995), and Weiss (2000) among others, we understand a developmental state to exist when the state possesses the vision, leadership and capacity to bring about a positive transformation of society within a condensed period of time. The developmental state was associated with rapid processes of industrialisation and/or the adoption of new technologies – that is, moving into higher value-added activities relative to the starting point. Typically, there was a shift from subsistence agriculture to more commercial, export-oriented farming, or to textile processing, or to tourism, or a mixture of these.

In applying this theory to our study, we observed that the weakness of the Nigerian state is made manifest in her inability to address the problem of entrepreneurial development which is supposed to be the engine of the economy and national growth. The Nigerian state over the years, failed to pay serious attention to the development of the southeast whether by omission or commission especially since the end of the civil war. Rather, the people of the southeast through their resilience had operated under harsh economic conditions and have emerged as the greatest contributor to the growth and development of small and medium scale enterprises not only in Nigeria, but in the West African sub region. Igbo people view entrepreneurship as self employment of any sort, which bothers on continuously identifying, evaluating and taking advantage of business opportunities and initiating sustainable action to ensure success. It is as well understood as a search for profit based on innovation, creativity and efficient utilization of resources in a consistent Igbo cultural pattern, which is filled with vision and enthusiasm and is result driven (Ezeajughu, 2021).

Therefore, entrepreneurship for the Igbo people incorporates every profit and goal oriented strategies which they describe as *Ibido ahia* or *Oru* (starting an enterprise), *Izu ahia* (business transactions), *Imu ahia* (learning a trade), *Imu oru* (learning a craft or vocation), and *Igba oso ahia*. For the IAS to contribute to

national growth and industrialization, especially in the Southeast region of the country, there is need for the state governments of the five states in the Southeast to be fully involve through the provision of a conducive environment that is secured and making of regulatory policies and legislations that would enhance the IAS and hence contribute to entrepreneurial growth and industrialization of the zone.

4. The Igbos of Southeast Nigeria: A Historical Overview

The Igbo people of Nigeria are the third largest ethnic group in country and they occupy the south-eastern geographical region of the country (Njokwu, 1990). They are well revered for their enterprising prowess both within Nigeria and beyond. They speak the same language (the Igbo language) which even though has developed into different dialects is still understood by all Igbos. The Igbos according to Isichei (1976) originated from the areas referred to as the Igbo-heartland which include – Okigwe, Orlu, Owerri, and Awka towns. The Igbo ethnic group makes up the five south-eastern states of Nigeria namely, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states and parts of Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta States of present-day Nigeria.. In spite of the geopolitical divisions, the Igbos share similar cultural patterns, which are based on similar cults and socio-cultural institutions (Agama & Ohajionu, 2021).

Traditional Igbo society was known for farming, craft, iron work, production of palm products, trading and traditional education. However, in the present time commerce and industry are now the predominant occupation of the Igbo. Farming is now like a part time job for the old and rural dwellers due to the absence equipments for mechanized farm. This adversely affects cost of living in the region. Traditionally, the region is describe as a democratic society with a decentralized system of decision making. Decisions are taken in different group categories with individuals having the opportunity to express and defend themselves through such groups. Prominent among them are the Age grades, the Umuada (daughters of the land), the Chief Priest and his assistants and the Council of the Elders which is the highest decision making body in Igbo democracy (Agbaenyi & Nwagbo, 2016). As Kpughur (2014) avers “the Igbo also had developed a political institution, but the principal governing authority in each community for making of rules and deciding cases was a Council of Elders” (Agbaenyi & Nwagbo, 2016). The Igbo people among many other things are highly persevering, they struggle to make end meet. One will wonder little why they are very enterprising wherever they are and successful. They are extra resilient to retrogressive factors of life. No matter the ups and downs in their struggle to survival, Igbo people believe that giving up is not the best, so the end determines the means (Ani, Ome & Nwankwo, 2014: 399-400). Finally, ndi Igbo are people that are industrious, enterprising, successful, resilient and above all human investors and nation builders (Iloanya & Nwanegbo-Ben, 2021).

5. IAS and Entrepreneurial Development in Igboland

The Igbo apprenticeship system is an “Oga - Nwaboi” relationship, that is a Master-Servant relationship where the master settles the servant at the completion of the apprenticeship period (Okwuowulu, 2022). Apprenticeship as a method of establishing young people, and training the unskilled, has been very beneficial to the Igbos. Many people achieved excellence in their calling because their “Oga” trained and settled them well. Many notable business moguls in the Nnewi auto spare parts market attribute their success to what they learnt as apprentice. Today, the Nnewi auto spare parts market is arguably the largest spare part market in Nigeria. Admittedly, apprenticeship offers the Nwaboi the opportunity to acquire business acumen, work attitude, how to deal with suppliers and customers, and interaction with other practitioners. It provides contacts/networks and lessens the burden on the Nwaboi's parents (Okwuowulu, 2022).

5.1 Goals of the IAS

There are two main goals (motivation) behind the invention of the IAS. Firstly it was originally invented and intended to prevent extreme poverty and inequality in the society (Ndubuisi, 2019). Secondly, it was invented partly to get every able bodied Igbo youth productively engaged in order to discourage laziness and idleness - two traits greatly abhorred by the Igbo culture (Agama & Ohajionu, 2021).

5.2 Types of Igbo Apprenticeship

The IAS of the Igbo people are made up of Igba-odibo or Igba-boi, Imu-ahia, Imu-oru, and Igba-oso-ahia (Ezeajughu, 2021). These are briefly discussed below.

Igba-odibo or **Igba-boi** (Traditional Business School): once a ward is under the care of his master/mistress, he becomes a servant “Odibo” (servant). The “Igba-odibo” (Traditional Business School) in this context refers to someone who is being trained in the act of buying and selling or marketing concepts. It is a process whereby a family gives out their children to live and serve the wealthy ones in the society. The terms and conditions of “Igbaodibo” are mostly oral, yet they are embedded in the Igbo customs, norms, and traditions, and there is no charge for “Igba-odibo” unlike in the case of some apprenticeship trainings. The final apprenticeship contract between the master and the apprentice's family is normally preceded by a trial or test period of about three months, a period during which the apprentice's suitability for the job or other role is being tested. Once an apprentice is under the care of his/her master/mistress, he becomes a servant. The master and/or mistress cares and caters for the servant's/maid's well-being for an agreed period of time, while, in turn, the servant/maid assists his/her master and/or mistress in business and other domestic works while living with them. The apprentice is expected to be faithful to his/her master/mistress. During this period, the master/mistress as the mentor exposes the strategies of the business to him/her. If the apprentice is intelligent enough to master the business, the master/mistress may start another business outlet for the servant to manage. This helps them to master all the strategies and techniques of the particular business. The apprentice is expected to serve his master without reservation. The Igbo believe that “onye fee eze, eze e-ruo ya aka” (You will be measured in the same way you measure others). The implication of this is that when a servant/maid serves his master and/or mistress faithfully, he/she will be served faithfully by another servant/maid (Iloanya & Nwanegbo-Ben, 2021; Ezeajughu, 2021).

Imu-ahia (business coaching): this is used for a learner who is not under the direct supervision of a master/coach in marketing business, but who is just there to learn the business. It is mainly for those who have some capital to invest in a business but lack the knowledge thereof. Many traders use this also to diversify their businesses.

Imu-oru (craft/vocational apprenticeship): this involves working with different tools and equipment. It means learning the expert knowledge of a particular vocation. It is also a means of diversification.

Igba-oso-ahia (a form of business trick): this is used by traders to raise capital for business. It involves selling another person's goods at a higher price. This research work deals with Igba-odibo (Traditional Business School) as a business induction strategy towards the success of indigenous Igbo entrepreneurs in micro business.

Igbo entrepreneurial and business activities remains the backbone of the Nigerian economy, Studies on business and entrepreneurial activities have put Igbos 1 above other ethnic groups in the country in Lagos, which is the Nigerian economic capital, Igbo businesses accounts for the 74% of all investments

according to Maliga (2013). This Igbo businesses and entrepreneurial activities have continued to facilitate improved standard of living for Nigerians both in Lagos and other parts of Nigeria. Considering the general economic status of the Igbos after the Nigeria/Biafran war, five decades ago, and this economic achievement by the Igbo ethnic group is very significant. Instead of just licking their wounds from the war, the Igbos has used a unique entrepreneurship apprenticeship approach to spur economic growth and sustainable livelihood. Their competitiveness and enterprising skills made them migrate in droves away from their cultural enclave in southeastern Nigeria, to other parts of Nigeria and beyond, where they have created and established different lines of enterprises (Ezeajughu, 2021).

An average Igbo is one entrepreneur that has the ability to create a business, nurse it to growth and profitability or take over an existing nonperforming business to turn it around or discovers a new market for existing goods and services in order to live by profit. The Igbos are scattered over Nigeria where in most cases they helped to established those markets. In West Africa, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon and South Africa, we have good population of Igbos doing businesses in these places and all over Africa. They are in Malaysia, Singapore, China, Japan and Dubai, USA and Canada as well as UK and Western and Eastern Europe. Where ever they migrate to they receive help including finances from the local branch of the Igbo Union and the *Eze-Igbo* of the locality. The Igbos are also guided and inspired by the principle of *Nwanne di na mba* meaning: a brother in distant land. That the need to assist your fellow tribe men even if the people so-concern are not members of one's immediate or extended family. Igbo entrepreneurs are often suppliers-middlemen, wholesalers and retailers (micropreneurs) breaking bulks, innovating and meeting needs in the interior markets of their hosts and living on their profits. For instance, it was the Igbo who introduced packaged water (*pure water*) into Ghana (Mbaegbu & Ekienabor, 2018).

An Igbo entrepreneur is a person who does not only coordinate other factors of production, but who from time to time seeks opportunities to make profit through his/her innovativeness, creativity, customers' satisfaction and efficient utilization of scarce resources in a consistent cultural pattern. Thus, Igbo entrepreneurs are visionary, enthusiastic and result driven. These are not far from the rationale behind their undertakings in high business risk (Orugun & Nafiu, 2014). Without policies and programmes suitable for backup and growth from any source, fountains are still made by these unique entrepreneurs in the Nigerian business environment. In the real fact, it is never gainsaying that people at the rural and urban areas in Nigeria depend heavily on the Igbo entrepreneurs' initiatives, inventions and efficient outcomes. The Igbo entrepreneurs have dominated Nigeria and even across the national boundary, such as South Africa, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali and Gambia, China and so on (Orugun & Nafiu, 2014).

The Igbo entrepreneurs have successfully established businesses that are not only bringing heavy returns on investment to them, but have also made life easy for the Nigerian people particularly in the areas of transportation, trading, electronics, and so on. Nworah as cited in (Orugun & Nafiu, 2014), outlined some of the business areas where the Igbo Entrepreneurs have their ventures as follows:

- Transportation and Haulage Business
- Construction enterprise and Real Estate
- Manufacturing and other Industrial Productions
- Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Petrochemical Industries
- Trading, Commerce (import and export) and General Merchandise
- Food: Grocery, fast-food restaurant, specialty shop

- Appliances: hardware and building materials
- Phones/Handsets and Computer Sales and Repairs and General Electronics
- Auto-spares Parts Dealership
- Car Mechanics, Vulcanizing, Welding
- Repairs and Maintenance of Electrical & Electronic Appliances
- Fashion Design, Tailoring, Hair Dressing & Shoe Making
- Carpentry & Furniture Making
- Film Making, Photography

From the above, it is observed that the Nwaboi Apprenticeship System is very broad in scope and it covers most businesses and all facets of the society. As entrepreneurs enter new lines of business, they birth a coterie of apprentices. Most businesses where you have successful entrepreneurs (even unsuccessful ones) also have apprentices. This organic and mutually reinforcing relationship between the entrepreneur and apprentice translates to what is perhaps the largest and most vibrant entrepreneurship development initiative in the world. This system has helped many young people, particularly those from poor homes who could not afford formal education to acquire useful skills to become self-employed, self-reliant, to create wealth and to contribute meaningfully to the society. It has also been argued by Olulu and Udeorah (2018) and Onwuka (2015) among others that the system has a wealth redistribution mechanism that ensures that wealth is spread from the rich (the entrepreneurs) to the poor (the apprentices and their families). In line with the argument of Ejo-Orusa and Mpi (2019), the IAS, and the number of successful entrepreneurs birthed by this system, we make bold to say that the Igbo entrepreneurship model is the biggest Corporate Social Responsibility regime in Nigeria and possibly the world.

6. The Challenges of IAS and Entrepreneurial Development in Southeast Nigeria

Despite the progress made by the IAS in entrepreneurial development in Igboland, there are an avalanche of challenges that has bedeviled growth and expansion entrepreneurship in the Southeast. This has given rise to unemployment and high level of poverty within the region.

Some of these challenges include but are not limited to the following.

6.1 Insecurity such as Robbery, Kidnapping and Ritual Killings

Crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killings, advance fee fraud (419), bribery and corruption, youth restiveness and political thuggery and violence are some of the major manifestations of the security challenges facing the region (Otu, 2012).

6.2 Separatist Agitations from the Southeast

There is separatist agitation in virtually every area. Here we focused on a separatist group called the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB). According to report, there have been countless conflicts between IPOB and Nigerian security agencies. IPOB wants a group of states in the south-east, predominantly populated by the Igbo's to break away and form the independent nation of Biafra. The idea of Biafra is not

new. In 1967, regional leaders declared an independent state, which led to a brutal civil war and the death of up to a million people. Presently this movement has been accused of launching deadly attacks on government offices, prisons, homes of politicians and homes of community leader (Aliyu, 2021). Despite these developments, the separatists claimed that their militant operations were mainly aimed at defending local communities from armed herders and bandits instead of fighting the Nigerian government (Chidi, 2021 cited in Asita, 2022)

6.3 Unknown Gunmen or Criminal Gangs

The economy of south east has been battered following the coming in force of a militia group known as Unknown gunmen who's major target are mostly the security agents either at the Check Point, or Police Barracks and other Military Formations, leading to deaths, arsons and destruction of properties. This type of insecurity has created fear and premonitions among the people who have refused to visit home and some have relocated their businesses to other regions of the country

6.4 The Declaration of Sit- at- Home in the Southeast of Nigeria

Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB through their spokesperson Emma Powerful ordered a sit at home from 8th of August 2021 in all states in Biafra land. This order was in protest against the arrest and detention of their leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu at the facilities of the department of state services (DSS) against court order. The sit at home order was initially for the days Kanu will be appearing in court. Markets are forced closed every Monday in obedience to the sit at home order. Since the declaration of sit-at- home, the South east has experienced all these resultant to hardship and economy breakdown. Reputable groups, prominent Igbo leaders, government agencies and businessmen operating within south east have expressed serious concern. This has grounded the economy of south east as business and establishments are not allowed to open on Mondays.

6.5 Communal Conflicts/Clashes among Communities in the Southeast

The incidents of communal clashes among communities in the Southeast especially over boundary disputes or control over markets or motor parks, which most of the times have always lead to killing of people and destruction of properties running into billions of Naira. These clashes equally affect relationships among families and communities and created distrust between people who are involve in the IAS contracts. Especially in cases where the people involved in the IAS contracts are from different families or communities that are warring against each other. For instance, in Ebonyi State, the crisis between the Ezzas and Ezillo, and the Ezza-Effum and Effum people.

6.6 Lack of Access to Finance

Finances have become a major constraint to business development and entrepreneurs in the Southeast. This is a fall out of the federal government neglect and marginalization of the region since the end of the civil war (Azojiri & Nzube, 2020). People find it very difficult to access loans even when they have collateral; they are still denied access to finance. This has greatly affected the growth and development of entrepreneurship within the region.

6.7 Electricity and Infrastructural Development

Lack of electricity is seen as a major obstacle in the Nigeria since most of the power cuts lasted for many hours or even days. Poor access to critical infrastructure such as good road network, access to clean and pipe-borne water and steady power have also affected a large percentage of the population. Only about one in every three households in rural areas has electricity and even when it is available, the supply of electricity is often unreliable. Forty per cent of electricity is generated privately and at a cost that is three times higher than electricity supplied from the grid. Cities like Onitsha, Aba, Nnewi, Awka, Enugu, Owerri, Abakaliki, Umuahia, etc., have all suffered serious power shortage and this has invariably affected their entrepreneurial development and productivity. According to Azojiri and Nzube (2020), the Nigeria's infrastructure can be deemed to be a nightmare to both entrepreneurs and the rest of the country's population, with the cost of doing business becoming very high due to the deteriorating infrastructures.

The Doing Business Index ranked Nigeria an aggregate 125 out of the 183 economies assessed. Nigeria's rank for each of the ten sub-indices is as follows: Ease of Doing Business 125, Starting a Business 108, Dealing with Construction Permits 162, Employing Workers 37, Registering Property 178, Getting Credit 87, Protecting Investors 57, Paying Taxes 132, Trading Across Borders 146, Enforcing Contracts 94 and Closing a Business 94 (World Development Indicators, 2015; Azojiri & Nzube, 2020). In all these shortcoming listed above, the Southeast is the worst hit due to federal government negligence and the failure of the state government to live up to the expectation of their people.

6.8 Tax Administration and Tax Rate

The various tax regimes of local, state and federal government tends to affect entrepreneur development in Nigeria. Teru (2015) cited in Azojiri and Nzube (2020), posit that entrepreneurs in a country have a responsibility of funding the government through paying taxes, however most of the taxes charged on entrepreneurs are not lawful and have effect on increasing cost of doing business. According to Fagge & Zubairu (2014), the allocative losses involved affect smaller and younger businesses more than others. On average, businesses held back by this problem are slower to grow and their annual job creation rates are lower by about a third. Most of the small and medium scale enterprises complains of high rate of tax imposes on them which slow their rate of growth and development in the country, as government increases tax every year on their little earned profit. Especially in the Southeast, entrepreneurs are made to pay all manner of taxes leaving them with little or no profits.

6.9 Financial Fraud (Yahoo Yahoo, 419)

Financial frauds among young and able young men have equally effecting the people who are involve in the IAS and entrepreneurial development. Many cases abound where entrepreneurs have been dubbed of their hard-earned money, and the security agencies have rather failed to prevent or stop these crimes from happening.

7. IAS, Governance and Entrepreneurial Development in the Southeast

One of the noticeable challenges of entrepreneurial development in Nigeria is the observably and contributory negligence of the government concerning the growth and development of entrepreneurship through supporting the SMEs and the economy. Little attention is often paid with artificial lip service, and

there are almost daily commitment by the sweet words of the mouth concerning business well being in Nigeria. Funny enough, most Nigerians will always want to retire to politics and not to entrepreneurship. It is observed also that being a successful entrepreneur nationwide will premise on your ability to incorporate business with politics (Orugun & Nafiu, 2014).

Having discussed so much about the IAS and entrepreneurial development, we turn our attention to the role the government must play within the IAS in order to enhance entrepreneurial development in the Southeast. These roles are discussed as subheading below:

7.1 Establishment of Trust Fund by the Government of the Five Southeastern States and Igbos in Diaspora

There is need for the government of the five southeastern states to establish a Trust Fund which could be used to support the IAS in Igboland as this will go a long way to solve the challenges of unemployment and high level of poverty in the region. The government of the Southeastern States should go into partnership agreement with Igbo entrepreneurs both at home and in the Diaspora so as to assist in the establishment of this trust fund which will serve as start-up capital for the newly graduated entrepreneurs from the IAS.

7.2 The Establishment of International Development Fund by Igbos within Nigeria and the Diaspora

The Igbo leaders of thought should launch the Igbo Development Fund (IDF), a public-private venture with shares sold to Igbo people and run by experts and even expatriates. The Fund should be headquartered outside of Nigeria. This should be modeled after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). All members of the Igbo Diaspora must be convinced to buy into the IDF as shareholders (Ihejirika, (n.d.)). The IDF would not only identify and supervise the real reconstruction of Igbo land to remedy the devastations of the civil war and the post-war neglect, including the rampant erosion menace, but also provide the needed capital that would support the state government of the Southeast to fund the IAS and help engender entrepreneurial development in the region.

7.3 Establishment of Special Directorate or Ministry of Igbo Apprenticeship System

The government of the five southeastern states should establish or create a Directorate or Ministry of Igbo Apprenticeship System which will coordinate the government effort in creating the trust fund and disbursing them taking into cognizance the peculiarity of the IAS in the area of entrepreneurial development. Some of the functions of the Directorate or Ministry of IAS will be to take inventory of all the Igbo youths who are involve in the IAS, that is, the types of trades they are involve in, the nature of the trade (whether capital intensive or not), where is the business located, and the expected amount involved in setting up a new business in that area. If the government will take up the challenge of paying 50% of whatever is required for the startup capital, it will definitely go a long way to improve entrepreneurial development in the Southeast.

7.4 Provision of Adequate Security by the Government of the Various States in the Southeast

The government of the five southeastern states should put in more effort to solve the rising security challenges bedeviling them. The security outfit code-named Ebube Agu has not been well equipped or prepared to tackle the security challenges in the region. The government of states should pay more attention to these challenges and cooperate within and among themselves in order to resolve the menace.

7.5 Policy Supports for Igbo Apprenticeship System in Nigeria

There should and must be a policy support by the government of the five southeastern states to the various communities and markets within the region in order to enhance and encourage the IAS and entrepreneurial development. The direct policy supports for IAS could be in the schemes and programmes targeted at providing financial supports for the informal sector players. Some of these include saving schemes and credit schemes, e.g., the Anchor Borrower's Programme (ABP) by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), schemes and programmes by the Bank of Industry (BOI) such as Government Economic Empowerment Programmes (GEEP), the Artisanal and Small-Scale Miner (ASM) fund etc. (Farayibi, 2015; BOI, 2018; Adesoji, 2021). Being a socially guaranteed scheme, these direct policy supports become relevant to the IAS, particularly, at the settlement stage (Adesoji, 2021). The indirect policies for informal sector which support IAS include policies targeting (i) productivity improvement, (ii) legal and institutional framework and (iii) the business environment (Onyemaechi, 2013). These policies are aimed at improving the ease of doing business in the country and allowing SMEs and informal sector players operate in a virile business environment. These policies enhanced the practice of this innovative informal sector financing by increasing the possibility of business growth and reducing business failures.

7.6 Providing a Regulatory Framework and Proper Legislations

Under the Nigerian Labour Law, there are two categories of apprentices; first, is the children apprentice between the ages of 12-16 years. This category of children can only be apprenticed to a master by their parents, or in the case of an orphan, by the guardian. The Law Officer shall appoint a fit and proper person to act on his behalf as guardian. The second category of apprentices comprise of young persons of sixteen years and above. This category of apprentices may lawfully apprentice themselves out to a Master. From the provisions of the Labour Act, the minimum age at which a person can enter into apprenticeship is 12 years. This requirement allows for the child to obtain some basic formal education like primary school before entering into an apprenticeship to acquire vocational skills (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019). The law of contract of apprenticeship in Nigeria is regulated by the Labour Act 2004, Sections 49-53. One major requirement of the Act is that every contract of apprenticeship must be in writing and attested to by an authorized Labour Officer.

7.7 Involvement of Stakeholders in the Political, Economic and Traditional Sectors

There is also the need for the government to involve other critical stakeholders both in the economic and political environment to help salvage the waning IAS and revitalized entrepreneurial development in the region. This can be done with proper coordination and organization of the major stakeholders through the harmonization of their ideas and coming up with a common front under the spirit of "Igwebuike". The

Igbo through the IAS and entrepreneurial skills have impacted heavily and positively in the economy of other regions in the country and even in the economies of the West African sub region, but the Igbo heartland has not fully benefited for what she gave birth to, therein lies the reason for a new Igbo renaissance which is also a wakeup call to all the stakeholders to come together and invest in the Igbo apprenticeship system in order to development the Igbo homeland.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Governance which is a manifest of government actions through policies and implementations is supposed to help improve the processes and activities involve in the apprenticeship system in order to create avenues for entrepreneurial development. Apprenticeship on the other hand, if properly harnessed may be the seedbed of a new spirit of enterprise and entrepreneurial culture that will mitigate the twin problems of spiraling unemployment and ravaging poverty. The government and the established businessmen be it in a town, street or locale has a responsibility to take-in teenagers and young adults as apprentice from their homes and give them informal business training and mentorship, as this will help with the production of more entrepreneurial skills and wealth creation that will invariably reduce unemployment, poverty and crime within the region and the country as a whole. Having discussed that importance of the IAS and its impact on entrepreneurial development in the Southeast, and also outlined the role the government through good governance can play, we can then conclude by stating that, there is need for the government of the five Southeastern states to adopt a collective security approach, bring all the critical stakeholders (that cut across cultural, religious, political and economic spheres) on board, create the trust fund as enumerated above and provide the basic infrastructure in order to strengthen the IAS and entrepreneurial development in the Southeast.

References

- Adesoji, O. R. (2021). Innovative Informal Sector Financing: Empirical Evidence from the capital sharing model of Igbo Apprenticeship System in Nigeria. *DBN Journal of Economic and Sustainable Growth*, 4(1),
- Agama, A. M. & Ohajionu, U. C. (2021). X-Raying the Bounds of the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS): Implications for Entrepreneurship Education and Job Creation in Emerging Economies. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 25(02), 1042-1064.
- Agbaenyi, A.N. & Nwagbo, S.N.C. (2016). The Igbo nation in Nigerian democratization: The need for collective political bargaining. *Preorçjah*, 1(2), 62-95.
- Agenyi, B.O. (2013). Mobile Banking and Entrepreneurship in Developing countries: (A case study of Nigeria). A Master's Dissertation submitted to the Department of Industrial Economics, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden.
- Akinyemi, F.O. & Adejumo, O. O. (2018). Government policies and entrepreneurship phases in emerging economies: Nigeria and South Africa. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 8(35), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40497-018-0131-5>
- Amaechi, K.E., Iwara, I.O. Njoku, P.O., Raselekoane, R. & Thobejane, T.D. (2021). The IGBO

- traditional business school and success of IGBO-run small and medium size enterprises in diaspora: evidence from limpopo province, South Africa. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 27(6), 1-18.
- Anifowose, O. L. (2015). An Analytical Analysis of Entrepreneurial Skills in Some Selected Small Scale Businesses in the Southern Region of Nigeria. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Organization Management*, 4(3), 1-4.
- Anigbogu, T. U., Onwuteaka, I. C. & Okoli, I. M. (2019). The IGBO Man Perspectives of Apprenticeship and Entrepreneurial Development in Southeast Nigeria: Implications to Economic Growth. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science (IJRIAS) IV(X)*, 90-99.
- Azojiri, E. N. & Nzube, J. C. (2020). Effects of Entrepreneurship in the Management of Economic Recession in Nigeria. *International Journal of Knowledge and Dynamic Systems*, 13(2), 34-56.
- Chinweuba, G. E. & Ezeugwu, E. C. (2017). The Ontological Foundation of Igbo Entrepreneurship: An Analytical Investigation. *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion*, 33: 17-24.
- Ejo-Orusa, H. & Mpi, D. L. (2019). Reinventing the 'Nwaboi' apprenticeship System: A Platform for Entrepreneurship promotion in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences (IJARMSS)*, 8(9), 98-130.
- Ezeajughu, M. C. (2021). The Igbo Apprenticeship System: Nigeria's gateway to world business dominance. *International Journal of Research Culture Society*, 5(3), 46-50.
- Gessler, M. (2019). Concepts of apprenticeships: Strengths, weaknesses and pitfalls. In McGrath et al, (Eds.), *Handbook of Vocational Education and Training*. Switzerland: Springer Nature.
- Ihejirika, C. (n.d.). Ndiigbo in Nigeria: A Quest for Survival and Prosperity. Lincoln University, PA. No Publication Details.
- Iloanya, P. C. & Nwanegbo-Ben, J. (2021). Entrepreneurship and dignity of man in Igbo Worldview. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 12(01), 047-055
- Kanu, C. C. (2019). The context of Igwebuike: What entrepreneurship development systems in Africa can learn from the Igbo Apprenticeship System. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, 2(1), 159-190.
- Kanu, C. C. (2020). The Context of Igwebuike: What Entrepreneurship Development Systems in Africa can learn from the Igbo Apprenticeship System. *AMAMIHE: Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 18(1), 9-42.
- Kalu, I. A. (2019). Igwebuikeconomics: The Igbo Apprenticeship System for Wealth Creation. *IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 5(4), 56-70.
- Mbaegbu, D. & Ekienabor, E. (2018). The Drivers of Entrepreneurship among the Igbos of the South Eastern Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Studies in Economics and Public Sector Management (IJASEPSM)*, 6(1), 49-62.
- Nigerian Labour Act, Section 50 (1), 2004.
- Nnonyelu, N. & Onyeizugbe, C. (2020). Reimagining Igbo Apprenticeship: Bringing it up to Speed with Contemporary Realities. *EJBMR, European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 5(3), 1-8.

- Okwuowulu, O. (2022). Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship System on the Development of Auto Spare Parts Market in Eastern Nigeria. *IIARD International Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 8(2), 1-10.
- Onodugo, V. & Onodugo, C. I. (2015). Impact of socio-cultural factors on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. *African Educational Research Journal*, 3(4), 246-254.
- Onyima, J. K. C., Nzewi, H. N. & Obiekezie, O. M. (2013). Effects of apprenticeship and social capital on new venture business creation process of immigrant entrepreneurs. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 2(3), 1 – 11.
- Orogbu, L.O., Onyeizugbe, C.U., & Onuzulike-Chukwuemeka, N.F. (2021). Apprenticeship and Entrepreneurship Development among Igbo Traders in Nigeria. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)*, 5(6), 2456-2470.
- Orugun, J.J. & Nafiu, A.T. (2014). An Exploratory Study of Igbo Entrepreneurial Activity And Business Success In Nigeria As The Panacea For Economic Growth And Development. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 3(9), 158-165.
- Rufai, A., Assim, V. & Iroh, E. (2021). Improving the Survival Rate of SMEs: Modernizing the Igbo Apprenticeship System (Imu Ahia). *Global Journal of Research and Review*, 8(2), 1-6.
- Ukwueze, N.C.J. (2021). The Igbo Apprenticeship model: A panacea for start-up failures in Nigeria. *IDOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 6(1), 17-23.