



**IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM: A STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR
POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND SOCIAL STABILITY**



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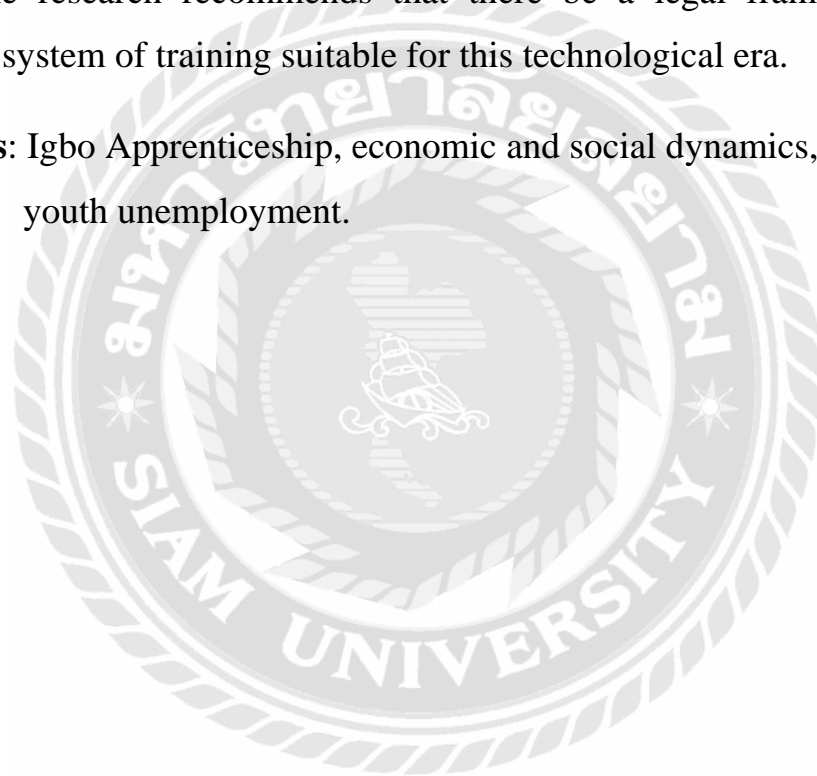
ABSTRACT

This research is an analysis of the lasting tradition of Igbo apprenticeship and its complex role in reducing violence and enhancing the economic and social dynamics of Nigeria. By using qualitative and quantitative research methodology which included the use of interviews, questionnaires, the study aimed at showcasing the extent Igbo apprenticeship can help in alleviating poverty and overturning the economic and social fortunes of people who partake in them, by so doing, reduce youth unemployment which is the leading cause of violence and social vices in the country. 1500 respondents, mostly youths from the major markets in Southeastern Nigeria, who are currently apprentices, graduates of apprenticeship, and masters of the apprentices participated in the questionnaire survey. 60 people were interviewed with a median age of 16-50 years. To determine the result from 1500 respondents,

frequency, mean scores, and percentage were employed, while thematic analysis was conducted on the interview results.

The research proposes that Igbo apprenticeship be made a polished alternative to formal education for those who cannot afford so. The research also suggests a partnership between the state and private individuals in making the Igbo apprenticeship more sustainable and attractive to youths. Lack of legal framework and organized structure has scared people away from the system, and so the research recommends that there be a legal framework and an organized system of training suitable for this technological era.

Keywords: Igbo Apprenticeship, economic and social dynamics, youth unemployment.



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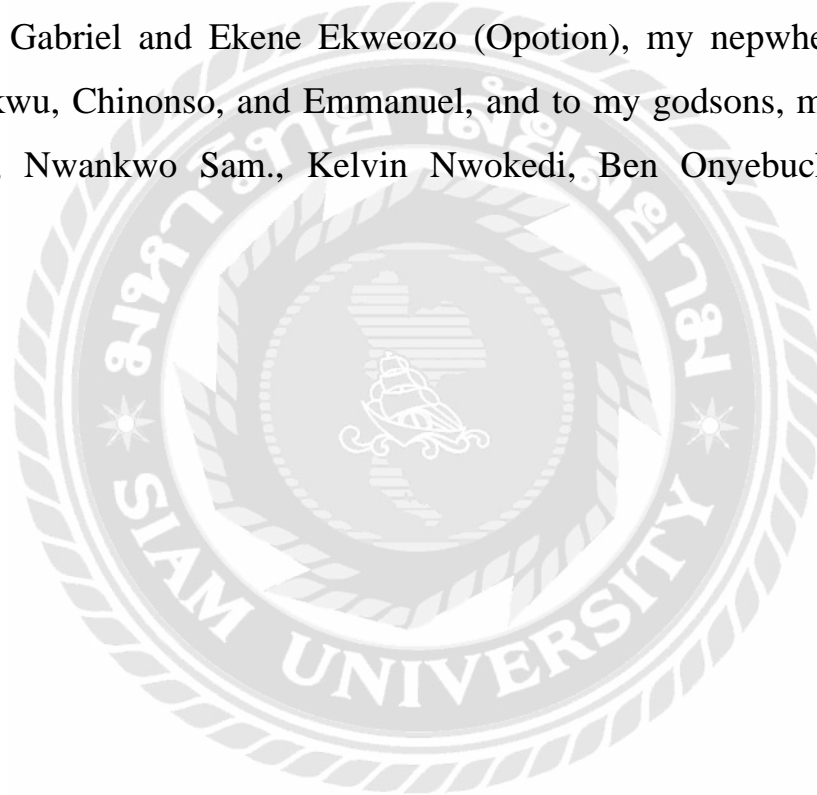
My unalloyed gratitude goes to everyone who has supported me in one way or the other, thanks to your kindness and your love.



**CELESTINE
EKWEOZO**

DEDICATION

My independent study is dedicated to Chukwu Okike Abiama for his unreserved benevolence and compassion towards me, to my beloved mother, Mrs. Mary Ekweozo, and to my amazingly exceptional father and mentor, Late Mr. John Egwuatu Ekweozo (Johnny Photos), my siblings Mrs. Theresa Maduabum, Rapuluchukwu Atammuo, Uju Onuora, Lt. Miss Antonia Ekweozo, Gabriel and Ekene Ekweozo (Opotion), my nephews, to Daniel Eberechukwu, Chinonso, and Emmanuel, and to my godsons, master Emperor Chilokwu, Nwankwo Sam., Kelvin Nwokedi, Ben Onyebuchi, and Frank Onuora.



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DECLARATION

I, Mr. Celestine Chimezie Ekweozo, hereby declare that this work is entirely mine and it is original unless specific acknowledgements verify otherwise. I have done this independent study by myself under the close supervision of an advisor.

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Date: 23 /April / 2026

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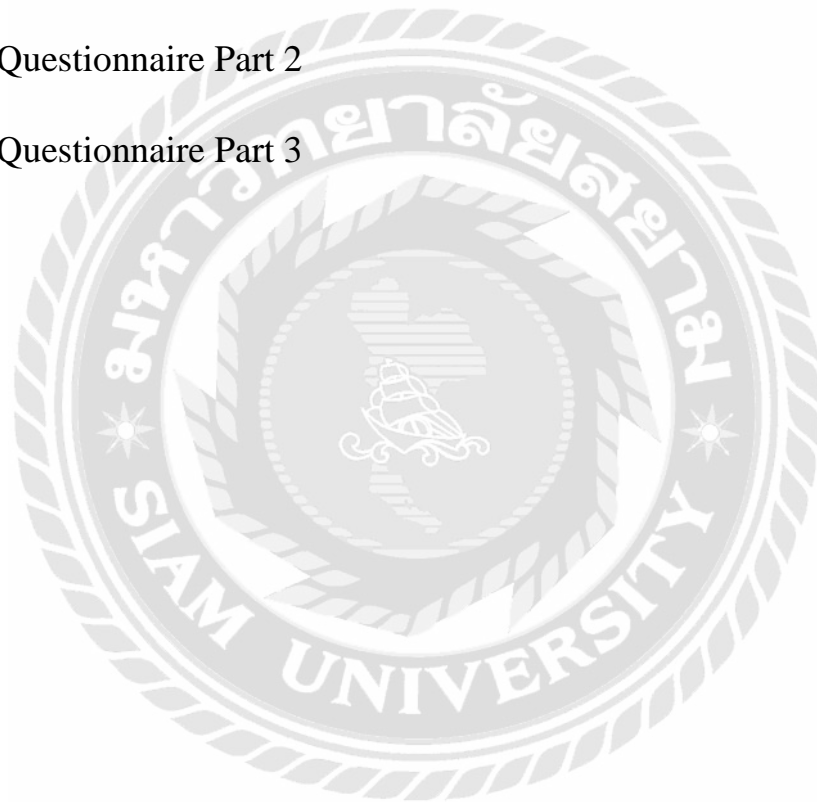
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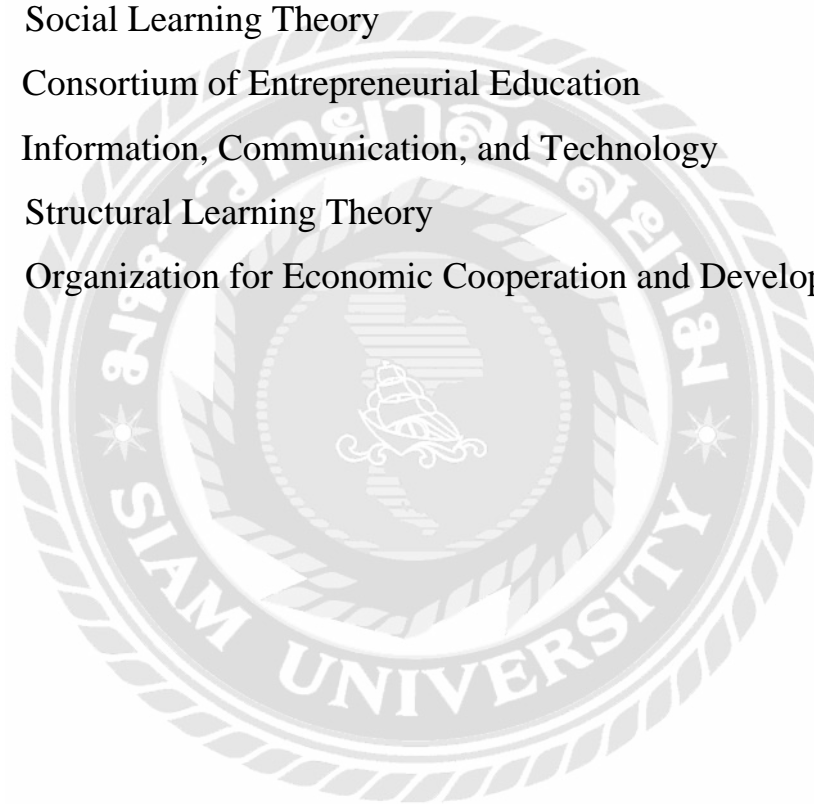
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List of Abbreviations

IAS	Igbo Apprenticeship System
EIBM	Entrepreneurship Incubation Business Model
SMEs	Small Medium Scale Enterprises
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Cultural Organization
SLT	Social Learning Theory
CEE	Consortium of Entrepreneurial Education
ICT	Information, Communication, and Technology
SLT	Structural Learning Theory
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

There has been an age-long misunderstanding of what we know as education, and who we regard as educated. Being considered as educated sometimes means being literate and passing through the walls of the schools, therefore, formal education. But there are basically two forms of education, namely; formal and informal education. Formal education takes place in a controlled atmosphere with the avowed goal of instructing students (Veronica, 2022). According to Coombs & Ahmed (1973),

“Formal education is the hierarchically structured, chronologically based ‘education system’, running from the primary through the university, and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programmes and institutions for full-time technical professional training”

The term formal is commonly associated or is the system of education where literacy is employed for the purpose of learning ideas and subsequently getting certifications as evidence of learning in an organized structure called school. On the other hand, the informal education includes every kind of learning that is not limited to literacy and formal school system.

According to Walker & Bitou (2011: 5-20), the apprenticeship system and its skill development approach within informal sector of the economy is seen to be the only saving grace embraced as observed earlier by many young school leavers whose parents could not train them beyond secondary school level. While this may

sound true, it does not mean that those who attend this informal training are not capable of going through the stages of formal education. In fact, it is as it were, an opportunity for families whose financial capabilities cannot afford the rigors of the university education. In fact, Rufai et al. (2019: 12), captured it clearly that it is wrongly assumed to be a program for those who cannot be successful with the formal education; it is very attractive to the youths.

In Igbo land, this practice gained more popularity with the end of the unfortunate civil war that lasted three years from 1967-1970. The Igbo people had lost everything they had prior to the war, including their wealth and businesses. After the war unfortunately, the then Nigerian government for whatever reason they dimmed fit, gave 20 pounds to every Igbo man who had money in the banks prior to the war, irrespective of the amount they had. To survive this situation they formed Entrepreneurship Incubation Business Model (EIBM) called the 'Imu Ahia, or Imu Oru Aka'. (Ugwu et al., 2023) As a result, this process yielded and has been yielding a wonderful amount of success, producing so many billionaires and millionaires out of nothing. This model has generated many Small Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) and start-up businesses but with little global and or international recognition. (Ugwu et al., 2023)

Generally, apprenticeship is globally practiced training and skill development approach used for years to equip learners with occupational skills (Lerman, 2012, cited in Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019). In addition to skill acquisition, apprenticeships also offer guidance and counseling, often involving trainees living with their masters to learn the necessary mindset, negotiation skills, behavior, and decorum required for the job through a process of acculturation (Anigbogu et al., 2019). This training and process varies from country to country, and from region to region within countries, but this study focused on the Igbo apprenticeship system.

Despite these variations, the fundamental aspect of the Igbo apprenticeship system is its focus on developing apprentices through on-the-job training, sometimes leading to certifications or licensing in their respective trades or professions (Ejorusa & Mpi, 2019).

The increasing amount of violence of many forms in the Nigeria, most of them through the instrumentality of the youths has raised serious concerns for well-meaning citizens of the country. Although we tackle problems from symptoms rather than the roots of the problem, the researcher is poised to agree that the root of many of these rising situation of violence is lack of education or proper education of Nigerians which snowballs into a full blown out of hand violence of uncontrollable degrees. Lack of proper education leaves so many youths with sense of worthlessness and a void that they seek to fill through the use of violence, addictions, or in worst cases, be used as instrument of achieving evil. This constant violence is therefore the source of the brazen insecurities around the country, ranging from theft, armed robbery, kidnapping, electoral violence, distortive behaviors like cybercrimes, to full blown terrorism and banditry.

Furthermore, unemployment, underpaid jobs, and lack of paid jobs for the citizens create an avenue for insecurity to rear its ugly heads. When people graduate with no hopes of getting jobs or no opportunity to start-up their own businesses as it were, they look for the opportunity elsewhere. Most times they look for such opportunities in the worst of places and means. They may resort to armed robbery, cyber criminality, kidnapping and other dangerous activities that undermine the security of the entire society. Unfortunately, majority of the victims of this dreadful situation are the youths of the country.

This research therefore, presents Igbo apprenticeship as a worthy solution to the insecurity problems in Nigeria as a result of youth unemployment in Nigeria.

With the Igbo apprenticeship system, so many youths can now hope to learn meaningful skills that will not only change their social and financial background, but infuses them into a sustainable source of wealth. This research is therefore an attempt to refocus the attention of the Nigerian people towards a viable and more productive enterprise, the Igbo apprenticeship system, which will create a more productive and entrepreneurial mindset among the teaming youths of the country, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Poverty and unemployment are very big challenges facing the country Nigeria. Unfortunately, lack of, or little efforts from the government in tackling those issues have created a loophole that has deteriorated into deep security issues in the country, because when the youths are unemployed, they look for alternatives, sometimes in the wrong places. The effects of the insecurities around the country cannot be quantified. In the last year alone, over 3000 Nigerian youths have died over different types of violence.

This study presents the Igbo apprenticeship system (IAS) as a way out of the heartbreaking situations of insecurity and violence facing the country. With no one ready to create opportunities for the youths to express their god-given talents and skills for the betterment of the society, the Igbo Apprenticeship system presents a good alternative to youths for self development and social mobility.

1.3 Research Question

1.3.1 How does the Igbo apprenticeship address the problems of youth unemployment and continued violence in the Nigeria?

1.3.2 How does the Igbo apprenticeship improve the lives and social status of the individuals who partake in them?

1.3.3 Is the Igbo apprenticeship a perfect model, or does it require some modifications?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Ho1: The Igbo apprenticeship system reduces unemployment.

Ho2: Igbo apprenticeship system improves the economic and social life of Nigerians;

Ho3: Igbo apprenticeship system is a perfect model of education for the youths and therefore needs no improvement;

1.5 Objectives of the Research

The aim of this research is to find out how the Igbo Apprenticeship system can help pull as many people as possible out of poverty. Specifically, this research aims:

1.5.1 To determine how the Igbo Apprenticeship System can help to address youth unemployment which is the root of insecurities and violence in Nigeria.

1.5.2 To showcase the extent to which the Igbo apprenticeship system can improve the lives, economic, and social status of its participants.

1.5.3 To determine what ways we can improve the Igbo apprenticeship to look more attractive to the youths and hence, suit the age of technology and Artificial intelligence.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The major aim of this research is to promote the values of the Igbo Apprenticeship System as a positive alternative learning and economic model to the already saturated classroom learning method. This research hopes to present the opportunities that the Igbo Apprenticeship System offers to its participants and the ability it has to transform and elevate the social status of anyone who undergoes the training irrespective of their social and economic background.

Furthermore, the research hopes to present the Igbo Apprenticeship System as a perfect solution to youth unemployment that has created serious problems in Nigeria. It hopes to show the Igbo Apprenticeship as a model through which many young people who are hitherto unemployed, not gainfully employed, or open for use by some negative forces that promote and encourage violence around the country, to become useful to themselves and the society in general. This is possible because of the social and economic skills that they would gain from the training which will ultimately elevate their social and economic status in the society.

Theoretically, the academic community will benefit more from the knowledge contributed by the research work as a basis for further research, references, and policy making. The research aims to add to existing body of knowledge and fill academic gaps where necessary. Again, this study will help Nigerians, especially the youths to understand the hidden value within the Igbo apprenticeship system, and how much it will help the development of the country, by creating more entrepreneurs.

Finally, the research would add more knowledge and learning opportunities to the researcher which will invariably result in an improved academic career.

1.7 Scope of the Study

There are many understandings and definitions of apprenticeship from various models around the world. In order to avoid ambiguities, the research limited its focus on Igbo people in Nigeria and how they practice the Igbo Apprenticeship as different from the general understanding of Apprenticeship globally. By narrowing down the focus of this research, the study would be able to understand the intricate nature of Igbo Apprenticeship and hence understand whether it is transferrable or simply particular the Igbo people of Nigeria.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

Poor Response: Because the research respondents were likely from the major markets in the major cities in Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, and Delta, respectively, response maybe difficult. People from these non-academic areas found response to academic researchers difficult because of a number of reasons like, “Why not come back tomorrow.” Despite assurance of the security and protection of their data, some found responding difficult, thinking their data would be revealed in time.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review is an academic attempt to look at various studies and researches that have been done around the Igbo apprenticeship system or apprenticeship in general. It is an effort to draw ideas to form a fulcrum for the research. It includes but is not limited to studies alone.

What we now understand as the Igbo Apprenticeship system (IAS) has not undergone so much of study and research by so many scholars. Those who did, sought to draw out, a refined and long lasting practice that will serve as a perfect model for a sustainable economic development in both the Igbo land, Nigeria and Africa as the case may be. Hence, there is not so much rich bank of literature that have investigated this system offering deeper Historical, social, cultural, and economic insights into the very concept of Igbo Apprenticeship System.

2.2 Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship

The prerequisite question one would answer when we talk about the Igbo Apprenticeship System is who is an apprentice? Typically, an apprentice is a teenager or young person who has completed primary school and engages in hands-on training, supplemented by theoretical knowledge, in their chosen vocation, trade, or occupation (Kanu, 2019, pp.14-28). The Igbo Apprenticeship system involves individuals who seek to acquire a specific skill or trade, working

for a designated period of time under the guidance of an expert in that trade (Nnonyelu & Onyeizugbe, 2020, pp. 327-342). From the above, one would grasp a number of characteristics; first that the individual must be learning a trade, a skill, or a business. Secondly, that it must be under a mentor, usually an expert. Thirdly, that it takes a number of years to finish this training. And finally, that when one completes the learning process, he is empowered to start-up on their own as autonomous professional.

This exercise begins with an agreement to be mentored by a master to acquire practical, hands-on experience and to master the intricacies of a trade, vocation, or profession (Nnonyelu & Onyeizugbe, 2020, pp. 327-342.). After the agreement, comes the actual training process where so many skills including negotiation, financial management to mention by a few, are learnt from the master. These skills would arm the apprentice with survival and management qualities to sustain the business or profession when he leaves his master. In fact, the system serves as an extension of the Igbo entrepreneurial spirit, where established entrepreneurs, locally referred to as “Oga,” inducts young Igbos into entrepreneurial ventures (Iwara et al., 2019, pp. 227–250). This exercise imbues the young ones with necessary components of learning namely: attention (Learning by keen observation), retention (ability to remember and regurgitate what they have learnt by observation), reproduction (being able to redo what they observed), and motivation (being zealous and committed to learning, as well as the drive to grow in knowledge and skills). The focus is to show through existing literatures, the extent of Igbo apprenticeship and where it needs to be improved to make it more refined and fit for the modern age of technology.

2.3 Nature of Igbo Apprenticeship (IAS)

The International Labor Organization (ILO) defined apprenticeship as a long-term training for a traditional occupation, primarily within an undertaking or under an independent artisan, a seamless transition from school to work for young people (ILO, 2010). The United Nations Education and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), also sees apprenticeship as a unique form of vocational education that combines job learning and school-based training to develop specific competencies and work processes, regulated by law, based on a written employment contract with compensatory payment and a standard social protection scheme (UNESCO, 2015). While this definition is wonderful, it does not fully grasp the model of apprenticeship practiced by the Igbo people. There are serious variances in tenets and practices of training and learning. As Vareto (2017, pp. 5-20) opined, these definitions exclude the type of apprenticeship prevalent in Igbo land, which is not affiliated with schools or colleges, they are 'jobs that includes training'.

The Igbo apprenticeship system has been ranked as one of the best incubation processes for business and entrepreneurship. Studies on business and entrepreneurial development have put the Igbo ethnic group in the country, Nigeria (Olutayo, 1999; Chukwuezi, 2001; Ukaegbu, 2003; Igbo, 2006; Agoziuno & Maliga, 2013; Onwuka, 2015; Lady-Franca, 2016; Obi, 2021). In Lagos, the Nigerian economic capital, Igbo businesses account for 74% of all investments (Maliga, 2013). The Igbo business enterprises not only improve the economic lives of the Igbo people, but also improve their social lives. This is not to downplay further education, but in fact to say that with the Igbo apprenticeship system, there is indeed an opportunity for anyone who wishes to be an entrepreneur in Igbo land, irrespective of your social and economic background.

Another interesting factor about the Igbo apprenticeship system is that it alleviates the parents of the apprentices who may be underprivileged financially of the enormous responsibilities of having to carter for those children who became apprentices. Anigbogu et al. (2019, pp. 2454-6194) observed that the type of apprenticeship system being practiced among the Igbo ethnic group is arranged in such a way that the apprentice resides and serves his or her master for some times, after the master settles the apprentice by setting up a business, and this is done by paying his rent and gifting him or her goods or cash to start his or her business with. With this the parents not only have their child trained in a skill but have their financial trajectory changed for better, if their child leverages the skills, business network, and knowledge he got from his master.

Moreover, there is a positive symbiotic rapport between the apprentice and the master. While the apprentice imbibes training and learning from the master, he adds to the betterment of his master's business. This way, he builds a continuous relationship that exceeds his settlement after his stay with the master. In some cases the master and the apprentices continue a combined business venture even after they are settled. This builds an ecosystem of continuous wealth creation and recycling of entrepreneurial spirit among the Igbo people of Nigeria. This was best captured by Neuwirth (2018) who described the apprenticeship system as the world's most powerful business incubator platform. The best part is that it does not mind the social or financial background of the individual in question.

2.4 Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) (Behaviorism)

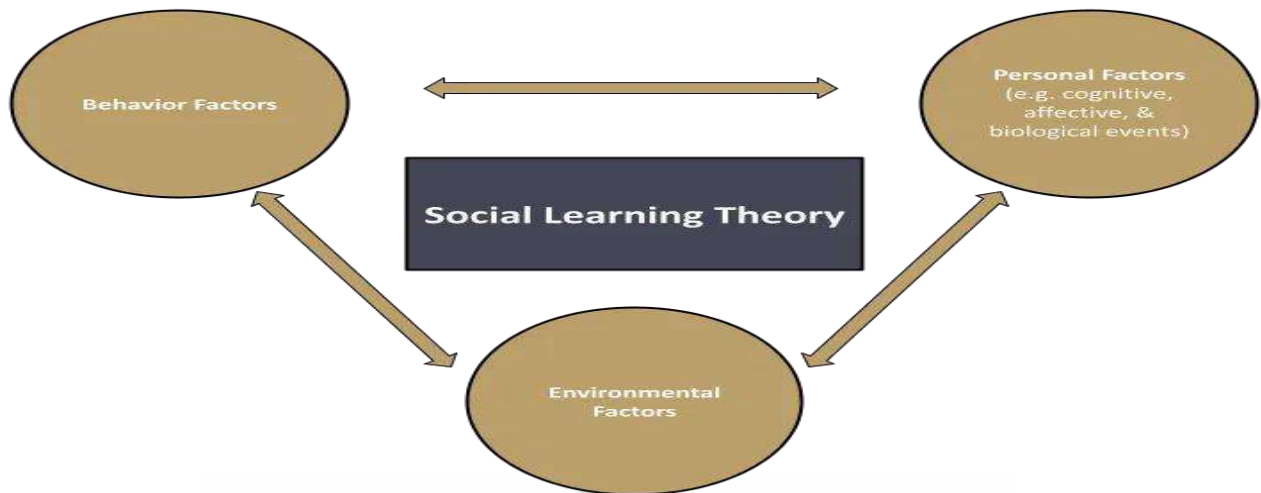
The Canadian Bandura (1977) set out to discover a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals acquire knowledge and skills through observation, imitation, and modeling. It simply means that people learn

behaviors by observation and imitation. Albert Bandura (1977) has the following to say:

“Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action.”

His major focus was on how the human environment and cognitive factors interact to control human learning and behavior. What an individual learns, especially children are more often associated by lived experience and post action of their observation. These observations are then modeled into actions, most times as creative action. Bandura believes that new behaviors are cultivated by the repletion of impressions from the observations of things and people around us. He knew how arduous learning could have been without the observation. In fact, the human mind reproduces the models of what the senses impresses in them some of the times as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Social Learning Theory

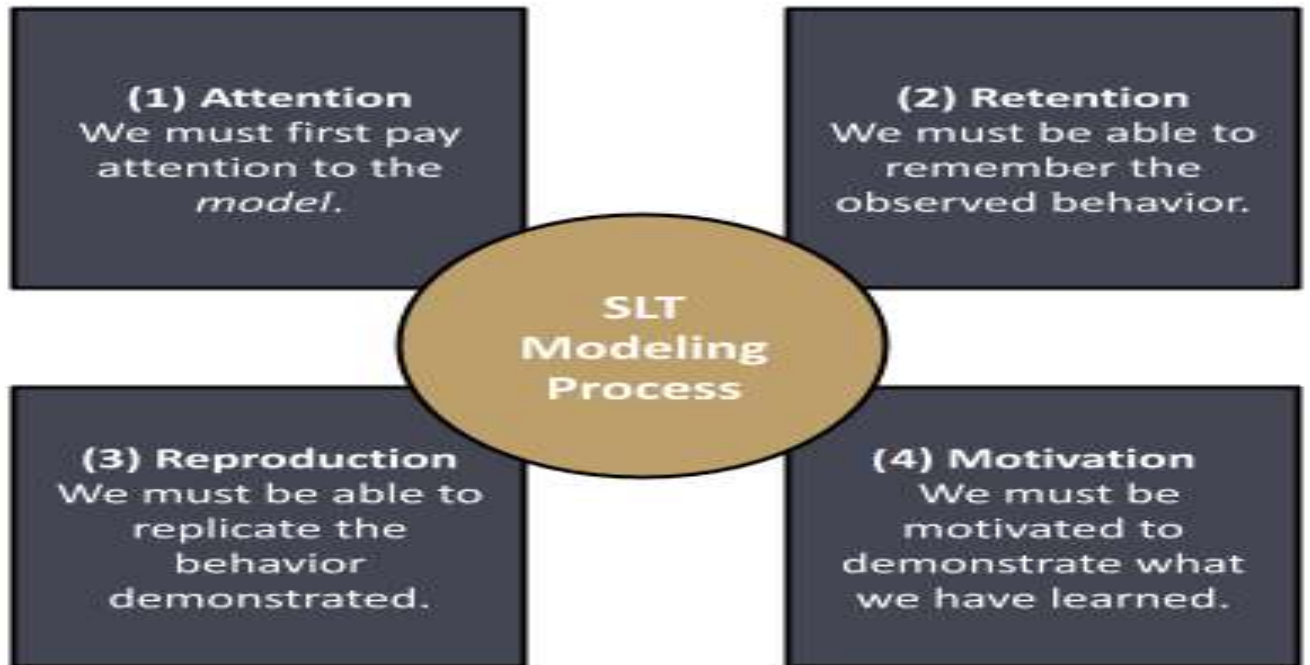


The Social Learning Theory (SLT) suggests that we learn from one another throughout our lives via the following processes (Nabavi, 2012, p.1):

- **Attention:** We must pay attention to the model. Our attention increases when behavior is more striking, different, or prestigious, and when the model is more similar to us.
- **Retention:** We must be able to remember the observed behavior; this can be increased through *rehearsal*.
- **Reproduction:** We must be capable of replicating the behavior just observed. Note that a novice may not be developmentally ready to reproduce the action.
- **Motivation:** We must be motivated to demonstrate what we have learned. This can be influenced by both reinforcement and punishment.

The following diagram shows the stages involved in the modeling process (modified from Nabavi, 2012), as shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Social Learning Theory Modeling Process



This theory known as the “Social Learning Theory” shows how and why the Igbo apprenticeship system became a necessary and easy way of inspiring young people into the very heart of entrepreneurship by closely observing and imitating their masters. With a keen observation which is the most emphasized aspect of the Igbo apprenticeship system, the mentee not only acquire the skills of doing or selling, but goes on to learn every intricacy, nuances, principles, strategies, and secrets of a trade or profession, hence, becoming a master of the profession he is learning. With such keen observations one is sure to pick up important skill-sets that would be invaluable for his reproduction of the observed knowledge.

2.4.1. Important Skills Learnt by Apprentices

There are some very important lessons that apprentices learn from their masters. These skills demonstrate the necessity of the aforementioned social learning theory which places its emphasis on ‘observation, retention, reproduction

and motivation. These skills can be largely divided into three main categories namely, interpersonal, managerial, and technical skills.

Interpersonal Skills: One of the best skills learnt during the Igbo apprenticeship system is interpersonal skill of interaction and communication. Within the apprenticeship, the mentee gathers the business language necessary for relating with everyone necessary for the growth of his business, his master, customers, and other counter-parts of his master who become allies and counterparts later in the years, his fellow apprentices, and so on. With these skills he is equipped to manage both customers and suppliers alike.

Managerial Skills: The most important skill an apprentice learns is management skill. He can forecast, control inventory with great caution, analyze situations and people as they come, recognize opportunity when they present themselves, and utilizes them as and when due. He also learns leadership, listening, organizational culture, negotiation and even when to initiate or abort business. Another beautiful management skill that he grows into is that of team playing where he is taught how to associate with care to carry everybody along in the business.

Technical Skills: It takes technical know-how to learn certain professions and trades as the case may be. Apprenticeship offers one the opportunity to imbibe so many technical skills including, monitoring, accounting, supply chain management, quality control, bookkeeping, forecasting and so on. These skills equip one for the actual management of personal business when they are settled eventually.

These set of skills are the root of the success of Igbo people round the globe, in manufacturing, in real estate, in commerce, in mercantile trading, in ICT equipment, in artisanship, in film making, and in automotive to mention but a few (Ejo-Orusa, & Mpi, 2019, pp. 2278-6236). This testimony of doggedness and commitment to wealth creation and distribution sets the Igbo people aside from others. This now leads us to the question, what are the real impacts of the Igbo apprenticeship system, and why is it necessary?

2.5 Economic Impact

2.5.1 Entrepreneurial Growth

Research by Oguntumehin & Nwosu (2014) titled “Building a Sustainable Development through Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria” was a deep dive into entrepreneurship and its very impact in individual and national growth. To set the context, it became necessary to question the conventional understanding of education in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. A country’s educational system plays an important role in the extent of their development in every sector. Unfortunately, we are still strangulated with the old colonial system of education that produces literate but unproductive individuals. In-fact, Daini (2006, p.252) quoting Ndu (1999) while clamoring for an urgent educational reform in Nigeria stated that:

“A lot of what we have taken as Nigerian system of education is still bookish, examination ridden and somewhat of a mismatch with the social and economic situation of today. A lot of changes have come into society but the education system has not kept pace with it. The abstract and highly bookish curriculum needs to be modified to include other things that are needed in the world of work that is not yet presently focused on.”

As an answer to this, they asserted that “Entrepreneurship education has been identified as a major means of assisting our youths and even adults to acquire desired skills and capacities to be self-reliant or self-employed.” (Oguntumehin & Nwosu, 2014, p.279). The major indices of measuring the development of a nation or a place is their human development index (HDI). When many individuals from a particular polity are skilled and productive, then the nation or place is bound to be developed as the case may be. Todaro & Smith (2006:11) while citing Seers (1967) has the following to say:

“The questions to ask about a country’s development are-what have been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt, this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result “development” even if per capita income doubled.”

The World Bank (1991: 4) further corroborated this above statement:

“The challenge of development ... is to improve the quality of life. Especially in the world’s poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes-but it involves more. It encompasses as ends in themselves, better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and richer cultural life”.

Moreover, any society that must achieve a high human development index must do so by training the youth who make up a greater percentage of their work

force. To do this, Oguntumehim and Nwosu (2014) suggested that the youths be pushed more towards entrepreneurship. What then is entrepreneurship? The Consortium of Entrepreneurship Education (CEE, USA) defined entrepreneurship education as a form of education that is out to seek for the preparation of people, especially youths, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who will contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. In otherwise the likely traits to be picked from entrepreneurship training are to be a responsible individual, and to become resourceful and enterprising. He/she can create something out of virtually anything. In doing this, he becomes an integral part of his immediate community and the society at large. “Entrepreneur refers to a person as a leader, planner, programmer, motivator, risk-taker, creator, innovator, technocrat,; while entrepreneurship refers to a process of leadership, planning, motivation, risk-taking, innovation, and decision-making” (Oguntumehim and Nwosu, 2014, p.281).

Oguntumehim and Nwosu,(2014, p.281) did list out certain necessary aspects that make up entrepreneurship as follows:

Regardless of the field, there are four basic aspects of being an entrepreneur:

1. Entrepreneurship involves creation process, creating something new in terms of value; value to the entrepreneur and value to the audience for which it is developed. The audience could be the market of buyers in the case of business innovations; prospective students in the case of new course, or the constituency for a new service provided by a non-profit agency.

2. Entrepreneurship requires the devotion of the necessary time and effort.

3. Assuming the necessary risks in entrepreneurship, with particular reference to financial, psychological and social areas.

4. Rewards of being an entrepreneur, with regards to independence, personal satisfaction and monetary rewards.

From the above, one can see how the Igbo apprentice regarded as the largest incubator of entrepreneurship becomes so necessary in the economic and social development of Nigeria. Every aspect of entrepreneurial training is deeply embedded in the Igbo apprenticeship. However, it is necessary to draw the line between entrepreneurship as Oguntehim and Nwosu (2014) understood it, and how it is in the Igbo apprenticeship. While learning those necessary skills, the Igbo apprenticeship provides even more values in the sense that the apprentices do not pay for their training. Their accommodation and feeding are also on the master, making the training almost seamless. While there are limitations to the Igbo apprenticeship due to lack of systematic training, learning by experience and other hands on experiences facilitate a more practical approach that provides even more seasoned graduates than the that proposed by Oguntehim and Nwosu.

2.5.2. Social Mobility

Social mobility refers to the progress of individuals between social classes or strata in a society. The measurement can be by incomes, earnings, social class, or social well-being. It can either be horizontal, upwards, or downwards as the case may be. Causa & Johansson (2010) describes social mobility as the movement of individuals, families, households or other categories of people within or between social strata in the society. According to Heckman & Mosso (2014, pp.689-733) it is a change in social status relative to one's current social location within a given society. The movement occurs between layers or tiers in an open system of social stratifications. What we use to measure social mobility include education and class

(rich and poor). It is most often measured quantitatively in terms of change in economic mobility such as changes in income or wealth. Occupation is another measure used in researching mobility which involves both qualitative and quantitative analysis of data, but other studies may focus on social class (Grusky, 2010, p.8)

Furthermore, the southeast region economic development company (2024) made a deep dive into the necessity of Igbo apprenticeship and how it has helped elevate the social, economic and even cultural status of many of Igbo people along the years. One of the essential premises of the Igbo apprenticeship system is the capacity to create social mobility via the achievement of skills and business know-how. The apprentice (nwa boy) trains under the master (oga), usually in a trade or business, for an agreed period often 3-7 years. At this point he must have acquired necessary knowledge not only in the specific trade or profession, but also in financial management, customer relations, and entrepreneurship.

Omede et al. (2023) in their seminal research paper titled, “Towards an Indigenous Social Inclusion Paradigm: Igbo Apprenticeship System, Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation in South-Eastern Nigeria”, made an investigation to understand the very important role the Igbo apprenticeship system plays in elevating the social dynamics of people who undertake in it. Their hypothesis gearing towards finding the connection and significance of start-up capital on poverty reduction in the South-Eastern Nigeria; whether business skills have any mean significance in poverty reduction in South Eastern Nigeria; whether the tenure of apprenticeship has any significance in poverty reduction in South Eastern Nigeria; whether mentoring has any significance in poverty reduction in Nigeria; and finally, whether the development of entrepreneurship mindset has any significance in poverty reduction in South Eastern Nigeria.

The result from a qualitative research was very interesting. People who partake in the Igbo apprenticeship are likely never to experience poverty in their families, because the Igbo apprenticeship system has a continuous method of training new people from poor families and hence, the more the people are trained; the more poverty is reduced as years go by. Secondly, the apprentices are equipped with sufficient business skills to enable them thrive and adapt in any business environment. With this, they are less likely to be out of business because they are stretched with a deep survival, and business skill training to carry them as long as they continue in the business.

Moreover, with the number of years spent during apprentices, and considering the fact that the apprentices live with their masters as part of their families, they are most likely to become so acquainted with the business terrain that they could easily attract more success to themselves and hence, elevate their social status afterwards. They also get to learn various entrepreneurial skills under their mentors as to be able to understand the intricacies of their businesses, build necessary connections with the high and mighty, and then learn various management skills, including customer management skills.

Omede et al. (2023, pp.103-104) pointed out various ways in which the Igbo apprenticeship system helped reduce poverty in South East, Nigeria. First is that it is a means of escape from hardship. Families that could not afford the university education or tertiary institutions could turn to apprenticeship as a succor and at the long run, it does help. Moreover, Omede et al. (2023) acknowledged the decline of the Igbo apprenticeship in Igbo land due to an upsurge in the quest to own university certificates.

Omede et al. (2023, p.103) believed that the Igbo apprenticeship could be answer to unemployment in Nigeria:

The Igbo have a strong belief that laziness will lead to one's demise. You must work or perish from hunger. Many young people today, in order to make ends meet, have had to learn new trades including trading, mechanics, and bricklaying. Apprenticeship programmes require even college grads who can't obtain professional jobs to acquire practical skills. After finishing an apprenticeship, a person doesn't have to sit around waiting for a job offer; they can start their own company.

Another good side of the Igbo apprenticeship system is that it provides an opportunity for start-up funding after graduation. Graduates of apprenticeship are less worried by distraction of looking for funds to start-up after learning. In-fact, the Igbo apprenticeship system made it a duty for the master (Oga) to 'settle' the apprentices after their training with enough funds and start-up support. With this they open the way for a smooth business development for the graduates of apprenticeship.

Omede et al. (2023, p.103) also found out that the Igbo apprenticeship offers mentorship and the development or entrepreneurial mindset to the young people.

“Because it prepares its apprentices to run successful businesses, the Igbo apprenticeship system serves as a model for effective mentoring. The apprentice is taught everything he needs to know about running a business by his mentor. He'll learn to think like an entrepreneur, one who isn't dependent on the state for survival. Many of Ndigbo's multimillionaires and billionaires credit their success to their upbringing and mindset.”

The Igbo apprenticeship therefore provides a remedial opportunity for families with little or no financial opportunities to train their children in business schools or tertiary institutions. The long and short of everything is that the Igbo apprenticeship is the easiest path to elevate the social status of people

who are hitherto considered poor and financially disadvantaged. The good part according to et al. (2023), is that it is a continuous process that will continue to thrive due to its careful planning and the societal backing.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Bandura (1963) defined Social Learning Theory (SLT) as a theory of social behavior that proposes that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. Renzetti et al. (2012, pp.78-79) reiterated that in addition to the observation of behavior, learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. When a certain behavior is rewarded regularly, it will most likely endure; conversely, if a particular behavior is continuously punished, it will most likely discontinue.

What we now know as the social learning theory took its dive from series of lectures delivered in the 1940s by B. F. Skinner on verbal behaviors. He had supported the stimulus response theory of Edward Thorndike which proposed that all learning boils down to stimulus and response because Ivan Pavlov had performed a response theory with food as stimulus and saliva as response, where he concluded that all learning is dependent on the strength of the stimulus on the respondent. Skinner (1948) accepted that 'echoic response', which means that words and sound echoed in the past and reiterated and re-emphasized by parents of children or authorities, becomes clearer and intelligible to children, even at their youngest ages, and even adults.

Furthermore, J.B Rotter, a professor at the Ohio State University published his book, *Social Learning and Clinical Psychology* in 1954. This was the first extended statement of a comprehensive social learning theory. Rotter (1954) shifted from the strictly behaviorist learning of the earlier period, and considered in its place the holistic interaction between the persons and the environment. In actual fact Rotter (1954) attempted an assimilation of behaviorism (which generated exact predictions but was limited in its capacity to explain intricate human interactions) and Gestalt psychology (which did a superior job of capturing complexity but was much less powerful at predicting authentic behavioral choices). In his theory, the social environment and individual personality created probabilities of behavior, and the reinforcement of these behaviors led to learning. Rotter (1954) emphasized the subjective nature of the responses and effectiveness of reinforcement types. While his theory used expressions common to that of behaviorism, the center of attention which was on inner functioning and traits differentiated his theories, and can be seen as a precursor to more cognitive approaches to learning.

Rotter's (1954) theory can also be regarded as expectancy-value theory because due to its central explanatory constructs. When we say expectancy, we mean the individual's instinctively held possibility that a given action will amount to a given outcome. The range can be from zero to one, which gives the person 100% self-confidence in the outcome of a particular action or event. For instance, a person will believe that a certain medical treatment will be effective for the cure of a particular disease, or a soccer player having the confidence that with a certain amount of training, he will become successful. On the other hand, reinforcement value is defined as the individual's subjective preference for a given outcome, assuming that all possible outcomes were equally available. In other words, the two variables are autonomous of each other. These two variables interact to

generate behavior potential, or the likelihood that a given action will be performed. The nature of the interaction is not specified, though Rotter (1954) suggested that it is likely to be multiplicative. The basic predictive equation is: $BP=f(E&RV)$

Where:

- BP = Behavior Potential
- E = Expectancy
- RV = Reinforcement Value

Irrespective of the fact that the equation above is fundamentally abstract and intangible, there is the possibility that it can enter numerical values when it is used as an experiment. Rotter (1954) bore the results of many experiments showing this principle. Notably, both expectancies and reinforcement values generalize. After several experiences ('learning trials', in behaviorist language) a person will develop a generalized expectancy for success in a domain. For example, a person who has played several sports develops a generalized expectancy concerning how they will do in an athletic setting. This is also termed freedom of movement. Generalized expectancies become increasingly stable as we accumulate experience, eventually taking on a trait-like consistency. Similarly, we generalize across related reinforcers, developing what Rotter termed need values.

Bandura (1963) argued that “the weaknesses of learning approaches that discount the influence of social variables are nowhere more clearly revealed than in their treatment of the acquisition of novel responses.” Skinner's explanation of the acquisition of new responses relied on the process of successive approximation, which required multiple trials, reinforcement for components of behavior, and gradual change. Rotter's theory proposed that the likelihood of a behavior occurring was a function of the subjective expectancy and value of the reinforcement. According to Bandura, this model did not account for a response

that had not yet been learned – though this contention does not address the likelihood that generalization from related situations would produce behaviors in new ones.

2.6.1 Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) 1977

Social Learning Theory integrated behavioral and cognitive theories of learning in order to provide a comprehensive model that could account for the wide range of learning experiences that occur in the real world. As initially outlined by Bandura (1963), the theory was entirely behavioral in nature; the crucial element that made it innovative and increasingly influential was its emphasis upon the role of imitation. Over the years, however, Bandura shifted to a more cognitive perspective, and this led to a major revision of the theory in 1977 (Bandura, 1977).

At this time, the key tenets of Social Learning Theory were stated as follows:

a) Learning is not entirely behavioral; rather, it is a *cognitive* procedure that takes place in a social context.

b) Learning can occur by observing a behavior *and* by observing the consequences of the behavior (vicarious reinforcement).

c) We learn by observation, extraction of information from our observations, and through them, make decisions about the performance of the behavior (observational learning or modeling). Thus, learning can occur without an observable change in behavior.

d) Reinforcement plays a role in learning but is not entirely responsible for learning.

e) The individual is not a passive recipient of information. Cognition, environment, and behavior all mutually influence each other (reciprocal determinism).

There are three basic concepts at the center of Bandura's SLT, namely: that people can learn by observation; secondly, that the human internal states are essential to observation and learning; lastly, learning does not necessarily result in behavioral change. However, one must understand that no observation leads to a complete knowledge. These steps lead to observational learning and modeling process:

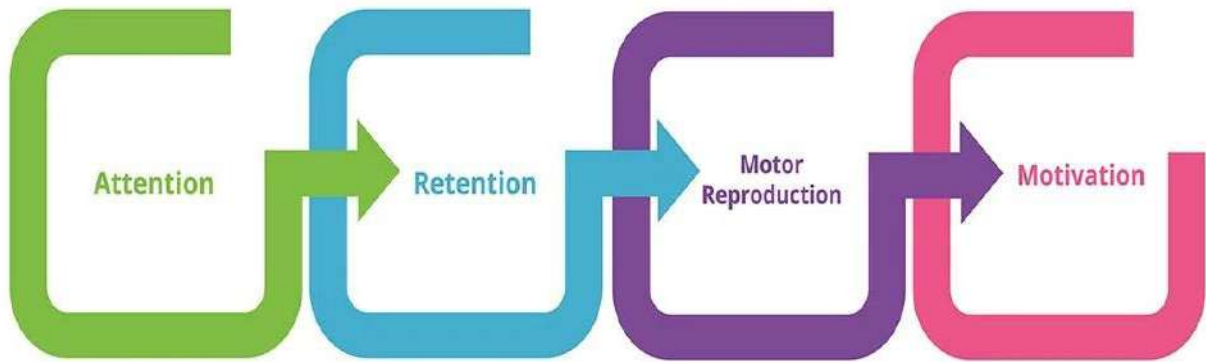
I) Attention: for one to learn properly, one needs to pay rapt attention. Distractions and lack of focus leads to negative effects on the observational learning. The more interesting or novel an aspect of learning is, the more likely attention is dedicated towards learning them.

II) Retention: One of the most essential aspects of learning is the ability to retain information. Retention however can be influenced by a number of factors, but the ability to retrieve information and later use them accordingly is very necessary to observational learning

III) Reproduction: After observation and retention, the next important phase is to try to reproduce what one has learnt. A continuous reproduction of what one learnt through observation therefore leads to improvement and skill adjustment.

IV) Motivation: Lastly, to guarantee the success of observational learning, motivation to imitate such a behavior that has been modeled must be there. Here, reinforcement and sometimes, punishment becomes necessary in motivation. These motivators create a high chance of learning. When one is sure of the reward or punishment of learning or not learning, he strives to either receive credit, or risk punishments, as showed in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Steps to Observational Learning and Modeling Process



2.6.2 Application of the Social Learning Theory (SLT, 1977)

There has been so much application of the SLT in many fields of learning. It has been utilized in neuroscience. The recent research has implicated mirror neurons as a neurophysiology basis for social learning observational learning, motor cognition, and social cognition (Uddin 2007, pp.153-157). Although still controversial, this provides a direct, neurological link to understanding social cognition (Fuhrmann et al., 2014). In social work, some theories can be taken from many disciplines, such as criminology and education. Even though SLT comes from psychology, this theory can be applied to the study of social work. (Introduction to Social Learning Theory, CORP-MSW1 (OMSWP), retrieved 2023).

Social Learning theory helps also to understand depression, and health promotion. It also relates to addiction as it emphasizes the role of social influences and reinforces the development and maintenance of addictive behaviours. It

suggests that people learn and adopt behaviors through observation, experience, and reinforcement from social interaction with others. (Smith & Mark, 2021, p.398). Even viral challenges as we see in the social media like Tiktok, Facebook, and Instagram are not all left out. They involve individuals performing a specific action or task, usually for the purpose of entertainment, and then sharing the video with their online community. These people learn and try to imitate the same action thereby manifesting the social learning theory.

2.6.3 Igbo Apprenticeship and the Social Learning Theory

The Igbo apprentice system is a model of learning that combines different positive modules of learning to encourage the development of individuals towards becoming assets in the society. Its training process mirrors completely, the social learning theory of Albert Bandura which includes attention, retention, modeling or reproduction, and motivation. To set it in context, it is necessary to understand that the basic underlying principle of the Igbo apprenticeship is hinged upon the ability of individuals who are undergoing the said training to pay attention to the processes. These suggest that experiential learning is important, as the bulk of the training is dependent on the ability of the apprentice to learn by observing the master through the process.

The Igbo apprenticeship supports Skinner's (1954) stimulus response theories that suggest that majority of learning are mostly stimulus and response. The Igbo apprenticeship is not a theoretical learning, but a hands-on learning that are done as a form of action and reaction. The echoic response is therefore manifested clearly with a continuous repetition of certain aspect of the learning to make it a part or the second nature of the apprentice. By this the apprentice not only teaches the student to learn but to master and be able to reproduce certain action echoed by the master over a period of time.

Moreover, the four stages of the social learning theory is a clear representation of Igbo apprenticeship model as it were. The child is picked from his parents with an agreement that he will stay with the master over a certain period of time. The initial stage lays emphasis on observation where the child pays keen attention to the process of the business or trade. The attention here also includes character, skill acquisition in almost or ramifications including business management, managerial skills, and interpersonal skills. After some time, he is allowed to model or reproduce these observed actions in part or as a whole. His ability to remodel or reproduce faster sets the stage for the last step which is his graduation.

Furthermore, the Igbo apprenticeship practices in reality, the last part of the social learning theory emphasized both by Rotter as ‘Reinforcement’, and by Bandura as ‘Motivation’. One of the motivations that sustain the zeal of the apprentices in the Igbo apprenticeship system is the fact that they will be settled, and supported by their masters after the period of apprenticeship to start their own businesses. What this means is that the start-up of business is assured to apprentices because of their initial agreements with their masters. Secondly, the hope of change in social status from poverty to a productively comfortable status after apprenticeship sustains their hope to continue the learning, and maximize the process.

Finally, the knowledge that one would be in charge of his own destiny and that after settlement by the master, he would be left by himself to grow and develop his business or art into something standard, also conditions the apprentices to pay closer attentions to how successful people like his master and his colleague so that they would learn the intricacies of the business, how it is outsourced, maintained, grown, developed, and how it attracts further investors or customers along the line. The apprenticeship system offers even more value to the apprentices

by offering them the opportunities to mingle, relate with, learn from, and connect to successful business people in their area of specialization, this way a network of success is built and sustained with years of experience and learning.

2.7 Summary Chapter 2

The Igbo apprenticeship system in general provides a lasting solution to many hydra-headed problems in Nigeria. It is an answer to so many lacks in the Nigerian system. But it is still not a perfect model. Even though the scholars above failed to show the void in the Igbo apprenticeship system, this research leverages this opportunity to point them out as a way of remodeling the status-quo and making the IAS more sustainable and attuned to the demands of the 21st century, the information age.

The literatures above show what the Igbo apprenticeship system is, its nature, tenets, and their observation of what should be improved in order to make the Igbo Apprenticeship Model better. The social learning theory of Albert Bandura, like the Igbo Apprenticeship shows that learning by example trumps majority of learning processes. They both place deep emphasis on observation and retention, which is the ability of an apprentice to learn the master's art in a particular profession through a deep observation aiming to understand the ken and intricacies therein and hence make it a second nature as time goes on. With the fleet of years, he is then expected not only to master the art of the business, but learn the ability to manage and sustain same, while leveraging the interconnectivity already in place to build viable network for the future, which is his own business. This goes without saying, the importance placed on remodeling as a form of learning. At the end, the motivation becomes a start-up, entrepreneurial mindset, a complete change of fortune and social status, from a poor or unrefined child to a seasoned entrepreneur and business mogul.

This is where we see the veritable result or say, importance of the Igbo apprenticeship system. First is that it creates entrepreneurs out of ordinary people and does not stop there. It goes even further to create rich, skillful, independent, and successful people capable of transforming the standards of living of both their families and the society at large. Stalwarts from Igbo apprenticeship system abound, but one would point at Chief Cosmas Maduka, the CEO of Coscharis Group, and Chief Innocent Chukwuma Nwala of Innoson car producing company in Nnewi, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Can the Igbo apprenticeship system be leveraged to restore back peace in Nigeria by giving opportunity of empowerment to as many youths as possible? While the above literatures did a good job of ex-raying the nature, intricacies, and importance of the Igbo apprenticeship system, it remains to be seen whether the aforementioned is possible. Does it serve as a youth empowerment program? Can it reduce unemployment in Nigeria, and at long run reduce both poverty and violence? Can we use it as a positive tool to fight the insecurity that has eaten deep into our youths due to a feeling of worthlessness? This research provides answers to these important questions moving forward.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research utilized survey approach. Questionnaires and interviews were used to gather data for analysis.

3.2 Area of Research

The area of study was the major Igbo markets, especially in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. The research examined the impact of Igbo apprentices (Igba Boi/Boy) in the social and economic life of Nigerians and how it can help restore peace through youth employment and skill acquisition.

3.3 Population

As of December, 2025, Nigeria's population was 240,041,412, according to World-meter (2025). The population size of this research comprised of people aged 13-55 years from the Igbo/Southeastern part of Nigeria. The median age is 17.9. The population focus for the data collection was as follows:

Table 1.1: Population

Aba	1,160,000
Onitsha,	1,553,000
Enugu,	950,000
Nnewi	193,987
Awka	167,738
Total	4,024,725

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling

The sample size for the questionnaire dissemination was determined to be 1500 respondents out of 4,024,725 people from the designated area of the study, adopted from Taro Yamane's formula, (1964). The sample of this research was based on the standard of persons who are literate and capable of attempting the questionnaire. The research also utilized a combination of oral and digital interviews of 60 purposively selected respondents who were either apprentices, graduates of apprenticeship, or masters the apprentices.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

Questionnaires and oral interviews were utilized for data collection for analysis.

3.5.1 Questionnaire: Questionnaires that contained 5 options: strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, or neutral, were disseminated to 1500 respondents, and duly retrieved at a commonly agreed time with the respondents who had earlier been deemed fit to participate in the survey. Each respondent was fully assured of the utmost respect of the privacy of his responses and information.

3.5.2 Oral Interviews: Combinations of oral and digital interviews were duly conducted with 60 individuals. Because the research employed a phenomenological approach, the real experiences of the apprentices, their masters, and some of its graduates were necessary.

3.6 Validity of the Instrument

In order to attain both face and content authenticity, the advisor and other research professionals from the Faculty of Management Sciences were duly given

the proposed interview questions and the questionnaires for constructive examination, criticism, and possible modification. Their candid examination and modifications of the research materials all became necessary part of the research. A mock test of 30 respondents (Not part of the research respondents) was conducted to ascertain the reliability of the response values. This helped to spot and correct ambiguities in the survey questions.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the measuring instruments was ascertained using the test-retest formula, to ensure that the tests produce consistent and repeatable results under the same conditions. The Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (K-R 20) was also used to further ascertain the consistency of the subject responses. To analyze the pilot scale, the Likert-scale was used, which yielded an average of zero-point-nine-one (>0.91), which is well beyond the threshold of zero-point-seventy (>0.70), (Hair et al, 2019). With this the consistency of the testing instrument is highly valid.

3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In order to analyze and codify the quantitative data, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of Fornell and Lacker (1981) was used. Helene Joffe's Thematic Analysis was also used to evaluate all the questionnaire data and interview transcripts. Some of the descriptive statistics that were used to sum up the demographic characteristics and the Lickert-Scales include frequency, mean score, and percentage.

3.9 Summary of Chapter 3

The research focused on the major markets where there were concentrations of Igbo people in the southeastern Nigeria. The areas included the Onitsha main market, the Aba main-market, the Eke-Awka International market Awka, the Ogbete main market, the famous Nkwo Nnewi, and Ochanja main-market. The study examined at how the incessant violence in Nigeria can be addressed, and sustainable peace restored in Nigeria using the Igbo apprenticeship model.

Using phenomenological approach the research employed oral interviews of 60 respondents. 10-questions questionnaires were distributed to 1500 individuals who indicated their interests to be part of the research. The sampling criteria was based on the criteria of being literate and willing to attempt the questionnaires and interviews. The purposive sampling approach was based on the standard of the individuals who are currently undergoing the apprenticeship training, those who had recently graduated, and the current masters of apprentices. This was determined clearly by the aims and objectives of the research. Helene Joffe's Thematic Analysis and the Likert Scale were used to analyze the data collected via the questionnaires and interviews, respectively.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis and Research Results

4.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

4.1.1. Demographic Characteristics

Table 2.1. Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
13-17	400	26.67%
18-30	600	40%
31-45	300	20%
45-54	100	6.67%
55 and Above	100	6.67%
Total	1500	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The biggest percentage of respondents (40%) was between the ages 18-30, showing that majority of the apprentices are mostly within this age bracket.

Table 2.2: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Level

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentages
No Formal Education	40	2.67%
Primary	0	0%
Secondary	1400	93.33%
Tertiary	80	5.33%
Total	1500	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

A fraction of the respondents (2.67%) had no formal education, and a greater majority of the respondents (93.33%) attended the secondary education. 5.33% of the respondents attended the tertiary institutions.

4.1.2 Responses to the Questionnaire

Research Question (Q/A)

Strongly Agree 5 (SA)

Agree 4 (A)

Neutral 3 (N)

Strongly Disagree 2 (SD)

Disagree 1 (D)

The assessment was based on Likert's 5-points scale, which means that any mean beyond 2.5 is acceptable by the respondents, and any mean below 2.5 is not accepted by the respondents.

RQ 1: How does the Igbo apprenticeship system address the problems of Youth unemployment and continued violence in Nigeria?

Table 2.3 Questionnaire Part 1

Question	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	I.A.S is the best youth empowerment model in Nigeria	700	500	100	100	100	4.0	Accepted
2	I.A.S can help reduce unemployment in Nigeria	600	300	200	300	100	3.7	Accepted

3	I.A.S can help reduce or eradicate violence and other negative traits among youths in Nigeria	400	300	300	300	200	3.3	Accepted
Average Mean							3.7	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the outcome of the survey, a majority of the respondents (3.7) believed that Igbo Apprenticeship is the best youth empowerment model in Nigeria. A large chunk of the respondents accepted that with the Igbo Apprenticeship System, many youths can be gainfully employed in Nigeria. Although there was a split of opinion, but the average number of respondents believes that if Igbo Apprenticeship System becomes a nationally accepted model, many youths would be pulled out societal vices that lead to violence, and disorder in the society.

RQ 2: How does the Igbo Apprenticeship System improve the lives and social status of the individuals who partake in them?

Table 2.4: Questionnaire Part 2

Question	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	I.A.S creates an opportunity for financial freedom and wealth creation	800	300	200	50	150	4.0	Accepted
2	I.A.S improves the social dynamics and social status if its graduates positively	750	400	250	75	25	4.2	Accepted
3	I.A.S is a sure path to a sustainable wealth and economic freedom for youths	500	300	300	200	200	3.5	Accepted
Average							3.9	Accepted

Mean								
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Source: Field Survey, 2025

A good number of the respondents, (mean of 4.0) believed that the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) has the ability to create financial freedom and wealth for its participants irrespective of background. Mean of 4.2 indicates that the respondents also believed that Igbo Apprenticeship System has the capacity to transform and improve the social and economic status of its participants. Although there was some level of difference in opinion, mean of 3.5 shows that the respondents believed that the Igbo Apprenticeship System is a “sure” path to sustainable wealth and economic freedom for youths.

RQ 3: Is Igbo Apprenticeship a perfect model, or does it need some modifications?

Table 2.5: Questionnaire Part 3

Question	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	I.A.S needs improvements to suit the modern age	650	450	35	165	200	3.8	Accepted
2	I.A.S is perfect the way it is. It does not need any modifications	150	150	100	800	300	2.3	Not Accepted
3	The disadvantages of I.A.S outweigh the advantages. It should be abandoned.	30	26	40	1000	404	1.9	Not Accepted
4	I.A.S can be better reformed when there are legal agreements and government supports.	700	400	200	150	50	4.0	Accepted

Average Mean							2.98	Accepted
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Source: Field Survey, 2025

A good number of the respondents (mean of 3.8) believed that the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) needs to be adapted to the technological era. Mean of 2.3 indicated that the respondents did not accept that it is perfect the way it is, therefore it needs improvement. Moreover, a majority of the respondents (mean of 1.9) rejected the idea that its disadvantages outweigh the advantages it brings. Although the respondents believe the advantages of the Igbo Apprenticeship are enormous, a good number (mean of 4.0) believed it needs to include legal agreements to better protect the mentors and their mentees. In all, majority of the respondents believed that Igbo Apprenticeship System has a good advantage, but it still needs serious improvements and embellishment to add to its quality. Part of the solution was to introduce formal legal agreement and partnership with the government to provide more sustainable opportunities for youths.

4.2 Thematic Analysis

Data collected via questionnaires and interviews were analyzed using Helene Joffe’s Thematic Analysis. Thematic Analysis (TA) is a method for identifying and analysing patterns of meaning in a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It illustrates which themes are important in the description of the phenomenon under study (Daly et al., 1997). The deduction of latent meanings underpinning sets of manifest themes requires interpretation (Joffe & Yardley, 2004). Three main themes formed the basis of the analysis, namely:

Theme 1: Igbo Apprenticeship as the Best Business Incubator in Nigeria

To justify the belief that the Igbo Apprenticeship is one of the best business incubators in Nigeria and possibly the world over, the interviews focused on the lived experiences of the respondents which are demonstrated in their responses to the question, “Is Igbo Apprenticeship the best business incubator in Nigeria?” The greater majority of the respondents believed that the Igbo Apprenticeship needs to be made a global practice for young people.

“There is no model of training that beats experiential hands-on learning, where a child learns by doing. I strongly believe that Igbo Apprentice was the chief reason we have so many billionaires from the Igbo race, despite the unfortunate civil war between 1967 and 1970, and the fact that everyone, including the rich before the war started with twenty (20) pounds.” (Master of 7 apprentices, Nnewi, Nigeria)

“I had to come back to this (Apprenticeship) because I was useless even with my degrees. It was hard, but I did, after carefully observing the benefits. I believe it remains the best model of training that should be encouraged for all kids.” (Trader, Onitsha Main Market, Onitsha Anambra State, Nigeria)

“To demonstrate the wonders of the Igbo Apprenticeship, give two people, one, a graduate of a Nigerian tertiary institution, and the other, a graduate of the Igbo Apprenticeship, 20 million Naira each, after 1 year, the graduate of Igbo apprenticeship will grow that money to 200 million and counting. I am not downplaying formal education, but this (Igbo Apprenticeship) is better for me.” (Importer and Trader, Ochanja Main Market, Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria)

The responses clearly support the hypothesis of the research that, Igbo Apprenticeship System is a veritable source wealth creation. The Igbo Apprenticeship System was carefully designed to train, set-up, and grow any

participant from a child who knows nothing about a particular trade, or skill, into a master of his own. It does not stop there, the master of the apprenticeship has the duty to make sure that each and all of his mentees becomes great in the field. That is the best wealth distribution mechanism that has created billionaires from poverty without any dime paid.

Theme 2: The Igbo Apprenticeship is can Help Reduce Insecurity and Violence in Nigeria

The respondents believed that the major cause of insecurity and violence in any society, not just Nigeria, is youth unemployment. Therefore, with Igbo Apprenticeship System solving that particular problem, the number of youths who would be available to be co-opted into violent gangs, terrorism, cultism, thuggery, and other forms of violent schemes would be reduced drastically.

“Most of my mates who graduated from the same secondary school with me have been arrested for one crime or the other. But, with this (Igbo Apprenticeship) I have been able to outgrow those levels of life. I am now focused on making money and growing to the extent that I will be like my ‘oga’ (Mentor).”
(Apprentice, Ogbete International Market, Enugu)

“Most of the terrorists around the country are unemployed young people who had no direction in their lives. “He who lives for nothing dies for anything.” When the youths are unemployed they can be turned into anything sinister, which is why the Igbo Apprenticeship System serves as a big remedy for youth unemployment.” (Business Mogul, Onitsha Bridge-Head Market)

“If the Nigerian government is actually serious with ending insecurity around the country, they know where to start, take the young people out of the streets, and make them useful. The Igbo Apprenticeship is the best way to do that. It not only trains youths, it empowers them to become rich and sustainably skilled for life.” (Distributor and Businessman, Nkwo Nnewi Market, Nnewi, Anambra State, Nigeria.).

For decades, Nigeria has grappled with a toppling level of insecurities of different types, Boko-Haram, kidnapping, cultism, intertribal disputes, to mention but a few. Majority of these are perpetrated using the instrumentality of jobless youths. The respondents believe that with the Igbo Apprenticeship, these ugly phenomena can be completely eradicated. If the youths become productive, they cannot be co-opted into useless affiliations.

Theme 3: There is a need for restructuring of the Igbo apprenticeship model to make it More Attractive

Although there are dichotomies of opinion, the majority of the respondents still believed that the Igbo Apprenticeship System needs restructuring especially to suit this era of artificial intelligence and technological advancements.

“I think it is long overdue for restructuring. Despite wonderful benefits that are coming out of the system, a lot of people have been destroyed by it too. There are those who were not settled or accused of one thing or the other, and left to go with nothing after years of service.” (Trader, Onitsha Main Market)

“Every system in the world undergoes reform after some years, and this (Igbo Apprenticeship Model is not out of place here) as years come and go, we

need to advance and adapt too, without destroying the foundation of the whole system.” (Market Executive, Ariara International Market, Aba, Abia State, Nigeria)

“I know everyone wants to change old systems, but in my own opinion, let us leave this as it was handed over to us. Immediately we start entertaining these changes, we may likely lose the very essence of the whole thing. We can create a channel of complaint for those who are/were marginalized to seek redress. (Business Mogul, Eke-Awka market, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria)

“Omo!! Let them leave it like that for us. They may likely spoil the whole thing for us with their ‘oversabi’. We like it like that.” (Apprentice, Bridge-Head Market, Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria).

The truth is that a careful observation of the Igbo Apprenticeship System clearly shows that despite its success stories, so many things need, from the way it is started to the way the mentees are being settled (If some of them were even settled at all). Many of the respondents believe that certain things have to be remodeled and some initiatives be welcomed to allow for growth. For some others, changes to this system may create a new problem that may cause irreparable damages to the system.

4.3. Research Results

4.3.1 Igbo Apprenticeship System and Poverty Alleviation

One of the major issues in Nigeria is the percentage of poverty in the country due to a number of issues which includes the ineptitude of the Nigerian government to provide jobs for her citizens. According the 2022 report by the Bureau of Statistics in Nigeria, a whopping 63% (133,000,000) Nigerians are

living in multidimensional poverty. “The National MPI is 0.257, indicating that poor people in Nigeria experience just over one-quarter of all possible deprivations. 65% of the poor (86 million people) live in the North, while 35% (nearly 47 million) live in the South. Poverty levels across States vary significantly, with the incidence of multidimensional poverty ranging from a low of 27% in Ondo to a high of 91% in Sokoto.” These statistics seem like an unreal number, but in reality may even be an understatement from what is on ground.

The poverty in Nigeria is termed multidimensional because it cuts across every sphere of the Nigeria society from the east, to the west, and to what seems like the poverty hub of Nigeria, the north. Unfortunately, there seems to be no end in view to this multidimensional poverty because the government of Nigeria in its succession has vowed never to do what will benefit the citizens of Nigeria.. Who would believe that Nigeria, a land with the most sort-after natural resources in the global market; crude oil, gold, diamond, cobalt, silver, tin, coal, zinc, to mention but a few, cannot boast of a steady power supply, or jobs for her hardworking citizens who are ready to do anything for survival.

To put it in perspective, Pulse.ng news report of 22 of May, 2022 has it that that over 10,000 Nigerians die trying to escape poverty, by passing through the Sahara desert or the Mediterranean sea to Europe where they hope for a greener pasture. In-fact, an average of 85 Nigerians die daily along these dangerous roots, with a hope that living the country will give them a chance to make use of their initiatives and strength in making lives better for themselves. Unfortunately, these numbers are fairly correct representation of those who lost their lives in search of a greener pasture. The irregular migration culture is a notorious endeavor that, over the years, has led to the deaths of many Nigerians and fellow ‘backway’ migrants

in the Sahara Desert, the Maghreb region, and the Mediterranean (Awosusi et al., [2021](#); Ikuteyijo, [2020](#); Okunade, [2021a](#))

Under the new nomenclature, *Japa*, Nigerians have experienced some of the worst cases of discrimination, racial abuses, and human trafficking to mention but a few. *Japa* is a novel term used by Nigerians to describe the outmigration trend of Nigerians into Europe and other parts of the world. At a recent Youth in Business Forum, a French Ambassador curiously quizzed one of the Nigerian youths to understand the context and meaning of *japa*, as popularly used in the country. In response, Peter Dingba, a Nigerian youth, averred that it is ‘a word that describes the entrepreneurial spirit of Nigerians; in that same word, it means that Nigerians want to export their contents, gifts, skills, and products, including themselves’. (Okunade & Awosusi, 2023, p.2). Would anyone blame those fleeing Nigeria in search of a greener pasture? Of course, not, nobody would blame them for trying to save themselves. The level of decadence in the Nigerian society makes it almost hopeless for anyone has life’s dreams to make it staying back in the country. This is not to negate the fact that some people still thrive in that dastardly scenario.

The Igbo apprenticeship comes as a big relief for so many poor families in Nigeria. It provides not just an option, but an opportunity to change their fortune after a number of years. As the paper investigated, the young apprentice lives goes to live with his/her master as part of his/her household, thereby easing the burden of so many things from the parents who are already disadvantaged financially. The child now has accommodation, feeding, as well as learning opportunities to improve and empower himself. The best part is that after the learning process, he is “settled”, which means that the master offers him some money to start-up his own branch of the business or sometimes become a partner of his master. With this, the

part to wealth is built and cemented through the experience and support of his master.

One part that makes Igbo apprenticeship even more interesting is the lifelong support and constant monitoring of the growth of the apprenticeship by the master to ensure he/she continues to grow. Because the Igbo apprenticeship supports and encourages innovations and creativity, it makes the apprentices even more productive and channeled to more wealth than their masters. With this the apprentice is already in a potential wealthy man waiting to manifest. This is the secret of Igbo dominance in businesses. The foundation is laid down from their young age. With this, their families are alleviated of poverty.

Furthermore, the way the Igbo apprenticeship was designed, was to alleviate as many families from poverty as possible, and it has been working out perfectly. That is why people like Innocent Chukwuma Nwala, the CEO of Innoson group, the leading car producing company in Anambra state, Nigeria, and Sir Cosmas Maduka, the CEO of Cosharis Group, could become billionaires coming from a very poor family. In fact, the bigger your business is, the more apprentices you take from poorer families to help reshape their social and economic status-quo. To be considered successful in Igbo land, you must be able to have trained as many people as possible, and made them be even more successful than you are in some cases. Fortunately, those people who are to be trained are those from families who may not be able to access further formal educations, the poor families. When they become successful, they will in turn train and stand other poor families and the chain of wealth creation continues.

It is almost a sin to be poor in Igbo land because of the many abundant opportunities to learn life-changing skills and get connection to the best and richest of people with no connection, `but just knowledge and connection of your master who empowers and connects you to his fellow rich men. This research argues vehemently that Igbo apprenticeship model is the best incubation for entrepreneurship and wealth creation and should be developed even further to make it even more attractive and interesting for the coming generation to tap into. With this more families will be able to enjoy opportunities to access life's goodies.

4.3.2 Youth Employment

One of the worst things that came with the ineptitudes of the Nigerian government is their brazen inability to provide jobs for the people. Despite the ingenuity and innovative mindset of Nigerians who constantly redefine themselves amidst all odds to be able to put food on their table, unemployment and lack of jobs has become a hydra-headed contention in the Nigerian society. Over 4.1% of the people under the employable age remain unemployed in the country. Majority of the unemployed in the country are mostly graduates and experts of important fields of learning such as engineering and technology.

To put it in perspective, the National University Commission (2019, p.187) reported that 267,731 students graduated across all programs in 170 Universities in Nigeria in 2019, with 150,731 males, and 116,498 females. About 50% of graduates in Nigeria end up not having jobs or not finding one. Those who do, mostly have to get them through a system regarded as "IM", an acronym for favoritism where you must know an insider in a company or firm before you are

referred to a job. This is not to say that so many do not find jobs on merits, but the chances are so slim in the Nigerian system.

Merits and meritocracy is often not a word in the scheme of things in the Nigerian society. Some government parastatals and other government agencies are filled with people of unmerited positions, some of who have gone past their retirement ages. What this spells out is only more doom for the young boys and girls struggling to graduate in the various universities. There are countless cases of graduates driving taxis and the mini taxi called “*keke*” in Nigeria. Some with a very high honors end up as Point of Service business operators. The aforementioned are for those who have a way to get start-up funds. The rest are either jobless or into one kind of crime or the other. Credits to those who create a livelihood through various other means like content creation on social media and so on.

The long and short of everything is that the Igbo apprentice model is a very important remedy to the debilitating issue of youth employment in Nigeria. It not only offers the graduates lifelong skills to make them socially acceptable, but also connections to permeate the depth of the market or the professions they have learnt. It is like an endless loop. People, who are pulled from future unemployment by learning skills, end up pulling more others, therefore reducing the number of unemployed and poor people in the society. That is why Okwuowulu (2022, p.1) regarded the Igbo apprenticeship system as the secret of the Igbos being the most industrious tribe in Nigeria. Take nothing out of it, because even Vracheva & Stoyneva (2020) accepted that the nexus between entrepreneurship and favorable economic outcomes is well acknowledged, and is largely believed to guarantee a

collaborative environment for the advantageous association amongst relevant actors in the business ecosystem of an economy.

Finally, the Igbo apprenticeship comes as an answer to prayers of the youths in Nigeria to at least be given the opportunities to try. The wonderful youths of Nigeria have been pushed into various negative pictures where they would rather not like to be. They have been called “lazy” for daring to demand that jobs be provided for them to be productive to the society. The youths of Nigeria, like every other youths around the world, need an opportunity to show the beautiful ingenuity in them, but the government seems to have another plan of relegating them to backseats, where they are called “lazy” or even used to accomplish so many evil designs like electoral malpractices, armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, and so on. This leads to the next discourse on insecurities in Nigeria and how the Igbo apprenticeship comes as a remedy for that.

4.3.3 Insecurities in Nigeria

One of the most current situations facing Nigeria is the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria has been regarded as one the major power houses in Africa, economically due to her abundant natural and human resources. But it has been plagued by incessant and often heartbreaking issues of insecurity. These security threats undermine the values of life and stability of the entire nation. The adverse effects of insecurities in Nigeria affects every sector of the society, the economy, the prices of goods and services, output, employment, the government’s budgets, socio-political environment, to mention but a few.

One of the often softly treated issues that have bred insecurities in Nigeria is electoral malpractices. When we talk about electoral malpractices, we mean the youths who are used as thugs to snatch ballot boxes and cause violence around the polling units during elections. Because majority of them are unemployed youths looking for means of survival, they are mostly used by senseless politicians to destroy the very neck of democracy, the elections in the country. Unfortunately, so many of them meet their ends or are terminally injured for some small amount of money paid to them by the politicians who will abandon when things go wrong.

Furthermore, the insecurities in Nigeria seemed to be concentrated in the Northern hemisphere of the country. The Islamic Jihadist group, Boko Haram, have had field days with the lives, properties, and lands in the Northern part of Nigeria. Investors have had to flee for their lives on some occasions due to attacks from the armed terrorists, Boko Haram group. They have killed maimed, committed arsons and many other sporadic attacks against the people and sometimes the government of the North. There have been heart-wrenching situations where they have organized sporadic bomb blasts in churches and in market squares around the major cities in the country. However, their activities are not limited to bomb blasts or killings, but in Islamizing the country as they vowed in 2009.

Another offshoot of the Jihadist group, the bandits have taken to kidnapping, killing, and continuous disappearance of many travelers around the country. In Nigeria, Bandits otherwise called hoodlums by the media men, had a humble beginning among the unemployed and idle of the north and grew to become terrible monsters that brought fear and loss of life to rural dwellers of that region (Atai, 2024, p.43). By 2019, Zamfara state became notorious as the epicenter of

banditry in the north. One of the most striking thing about this scenario is that it is perpetrated using the instrumentality of unemployed and jobless youths.

However, irrespective of the depth of insecurities in Nigeria, there are even other unmentioned types around the country, but they only point towards the level of employment and joblessness amongst the Nigerian youths, especially in the northern part of the country. The research has suggested that this number of unemployment in Nigeria can be addressed to a greater percentage if the Igbo apprenticeship which is often neglected in the scheme of things is made a national thing and the model repackaged to develop as many youths as possible and give them a sense of social worth. When a teaming number of a society's youths are gainfully employed, there may not be any room for them to be contracted or be used as bandits or kidnappers. When they are employed, the resultant effect is simple; they become an asset to the society. No wonder they are regarded as the leaders of tomorrow. This is why the Igbo apprenticeship system becomes a breakthrough in the Nigeria situation where the people are almost hopeless and helpless.

Finally, among the problems of Nigeria is the problem of "title", where people do things not because it will particularly benefit them, but because they just want to have the title attached to their names, doctors, barristers, Reverend, and so on, creating a deep sense of competition and unhealthy quest for what they do not need. In the midst of all these, the Igbo apprenticeship offers an alternative to the unhealthy desire to have college degrees when sometimes we may not be able to afford them. It offers an opportunity to become whatever you wish through the hands of those who have the expertise and the money. This is not to discourage university education, which in itself is very important, but to create an avenue

where youths can get experiential and technical know-how without breaking the bank, and still come out even better trained than some university graduates in practical and experiential knowledge. Dr. Cosmas Maduka the CEO of Coscharis group once gave a challenge that two boy's one from the Igbo Apprenticeship, and the other with a university degree be given a million naira and a space of one year. He opined that the apprenticeship graduate will triple the money in six months while the other may still be wondering what to do with his. This in itself is a testimony of how deep and wonderful the Igbo apprenticeship is, and how it moves one from a poor youth to a millionaire in a space of some years.

4.4. Summary of Chapter 4

The ken of the research is to establish the important values that the Igbo Apprenticeship System carries. To answer the research questions and further substantiate the objectives of the research, 1500 10-question questionnaires were distribute around the major Igbo markets in southeast, Nigeria, and 60 respondents were interviewed to get the first-hand experiential understanding of the apprentices, their masters, and some graduates of the apprenticeship model. Using the Likert- Scale, the research was able to do a quantitative analysis of the responses from the 1500 respondents based on the research questions.

A mean average of 3.7 indicates that the respondents accepted that the Igbo Apprenticeship can help address the growing youth unemployment and decades of violence around the country. Mean of 3.9 shows that the respondents also believed that the Igbo Apprenticeship System is the best poverty alleviation system there is. Any graduate of the system is automatically set in motion for wealth creation and sustainably improved social status, which he in-turn passes down, and the chain

continues in perpetuity. Finally, a mean of 2.98 suggests that the respondents were divided between the reformations of the system to suit the digital era, or living it as it was handed down to the Igbo people.

Moreover, the interviews from the various major Igbo markets corroborated with the opinions of the questionnaire respondents. The Igbo apprenticeship model remains the best business incubator that can transform the life of anyone irrespective of social background into a billionaire in a couple of years. Although, understandably, some things have to be reformed to suit to time and address so many reservations from victims of negative situations of bad apprenticeship situations, it remains a viable option to be accepted by the Nigerian society.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

5.1. Summary

The main aim of this research is to show how the Igbo Apprenticeship system can help alleviate youth unemployment and improve the lives of Nigerians and in the long run lead to peace in the society. Three research questions and consequent research hypotheses were raised to corroborate the research objectives. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the required data for the research.

The research therefore observed that:

- 1) The Igbo Apprenticeship System is a remedy for the perennial youth unemployment which results in insecurities and constant violence in the country.
- 2) The Igbo Apprenticeship System helps improve the social and economic status of its graduates and hence is a poverty alleviation scheme.
- 3) Although the Igbo Apprenticeship System is a wonderful model, it still needs modifications and support from the government to suit the era of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT).

What this research argues is that the Igbo Apprenticeship System is an answer to many problems facing the country, Nigeria. While it does not exhaust all the problems in the country it tackles the most pressing issue in the country which is unemployment and insecurity. Some of the major problems that puzzled the researcher include, why are there so many unemployed and jobless youths in the country? Why has the country been subjected to the quagmire of insecurities? The focus of the research was on the nature of the Igbo apprenticeship and how much it

can help to reshape the negative status-quo of unemployment in Nigeria. It provides a clear overview of the extent of unemployment in the country and how much it has affected the very dynamics of things in the country. The report provides even more details of how the Igbo Apprenticeship System has impacted the social and economic lives of many who partook in it.

Moreover, it is evident that the insecurities in the country, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, ritual killings, and so on, are all subjective to the same issue of youth unemployment that has for long plagued the country. It is undeniable to say but the least, the impact this has had on the economic and social lives of both the country as an entity, and the polity as individuals. The research therefore suggested that the Igbo apprenticeship model which has a proven record of real youth empowerment, be made a national model of education to help develop as much youths as possible to be useful to themselves and to the society in the long run.

The research did not dismiss the fact that the Igbo Apprenticeship as it were, needs remodeling and subsequent recalibration to suit the era of science and technology (AI). It also shows that the Igbo Apprenticeship is a continuum and not a perfect model; it is still open to improvements as the ages go by. This is why the ingenuity and innovative minds of the youths are needed. Moreover, some of the improvements it needs are subject to government partnerships and support.

5.2. Conclusion

The Igbo Apprenticeship System is recorded as the oldest of form of training in the sphere of work and business (Nnonyelu & Onyeizugbe, 2020). This practice involved the training of young individuals under the guidance and tutelage

of skilled masters to learn practical experience in a trade or profession. This practice became very popular after the events of the civil war of late 60s.

Moreover, it requires an agreement between the parents of a young person, the young person usually boys, and a master, to allow the young individual live and learn on the job with the master. Sometimes there are different connotations and understanding to Igbo apprenticeship system. The first understanding is learning a trade *imu ahia or Igba boy, imu oru*, learning handiwork (carpentry, car or motorcycle repair mechanic, barbing and so on), then *igba odibo*, a helper and sometimes a nanny. These ventures can be trades, enterprises, or vocations and sometimes involve domestic work (Iwara et al., 2019).

The Igbo apprenticeship model was broadly divided into three phases, the talent identification where the agreements and initial observations to test the compatibilities are done. Scholarship is the actual training when the master impacts the mentee with entrepreneurial knowledge and experience through a hands-on training. Here the mentee develops into a full scale professional and is equipped to compete and adapt to the business intricacies and dynamics. Finally, when the apprentice has been confirmed fully trained and up to the agreed time of his stay, he is set free by his masters with support to start his own, or to combine trade with his master.

The Igbo Apprenticeship provides an opportunity that could help reshape the dynamics of Nigerian economy should it be restructured and supported by the Nigerian government. Neuwirth (2018), describes the apprenticeship as the world's most powerful business incubator platform. Rightly so, the Igbo apprentice has helped pull as many poor and less privileged people out of poverty as possible.

It does this by nurturing business ideas, and business locations, raising capital for new ventures and starts-up, and transference of practical business knowledge among the Igbo Ethnic group (Alike & Umunze, 2019).

Does the Igbo apprenticeship need improvement? Of course yes. The study recommended that the Igbo apprenticeship system be restructured to be more systematic. There should be a synergy between the Igbo apprenticeship and education to equip and enable apprentices get ready for the wider world. Moreover, the Igbo apprenticeship program should also incorporate modern technological tools to make training better, easier, and modernized to suit the digital era. However, there should be legal agreements between all parties to be able to forestall future breach in agreements by any of the parties. Finally, the government should partner with the private sectors to leverage the apprenticeship to combat youth unemployment and thus reduce crime rates in the country. The Igbo apprenticeship offers a lifeline for reshaping the paradigm of the Nigerian economy that had become so dependent on crude-oil, thereby reducing productivity in the country. With this, independent and creative mindset is built, and men and women of quality created in Nigeria.

5.3. Recommendations

The Igbo apprenticeship has raised many millionaires and successful entrepreneurs. This is the reason it is attractive to many young people who consider further education after their secondary education in Nigeria a waste. Earlier studies revealed that young people below 12 are motivated to opt for entrepreneurship apprenticeships because it offers them earlier opportunities to build entrepreneurial skills (Nworah, 2012; Maliga, 2013; & Onwuka, 2015). Because many individuals have been empowered through this entrepreneurship

approach, contributing immensely to sustainable livelihood and economic growth, entrepreneurship has been recognized as a significant occupation among the Igbo people (Agoziuno & Anyanike, 2007).

However, despite all the positives results surrounding the Igbo apprenticeship system, there are still so much left to be desired in the system. The world is developing, and any system that wants match up with the global trend must have to adapt to that fast developing trend. As it were, the Igbo apprenticeship system is not left out because it boasts of an enormous number of youths in the entrepreneurial world.

Therefore this study recommends the following:

5.3.1 A structural Learning System: Despite the beautiful lessons and takeaways of the Igbo apprenticeship system, the system still has no organized structure of learning. The training is almost spontaneously controlled by the master's whims which are largely dependent on the level of a master knowledge. While hands-on experience remains invaluable, incorporating workshops, mentorship programs, or even online courses could provide apprentices with a more structured learning experience (Nnaemeka, 2024).

5.3.2 Education and Apprenticeship can work concomitantly: Sadly, in the mind of the average Igbo person, the apprentices is merely a substitute to formal education and the alternative forgone when you choose to go for apprenticeship is the ability to further your education or at least learn as you undergo the apprenticeship training. This study seeks to infuse some degree of formal education into apprenticeship to equip the apprentices with adequate

knowledge for bigger possibilities in the future. The research believes that since education gives one the means to stand his ground in the wider society and worldwide, the Igbo apprenticeship should encourage wider learning. Alas, the Igbo Apprenticeship system appears to de-emphasize inclusive learning with their interest only on developing specific technical skills. Regrettably though, a good number of the apprenticeship graduates find literacy so difficult that sometimes their wealth are easily manipulated by more educated counterparts.

5.3.3 Digitalization: Despite the growing trend of technological innovation, it seems that most businesses and the masters that guide apprentices enjoy the unsophisticated work methods; as a result, they subject some of the young apprentices under them into severe training patterns that infuse negative attitudes and trauma in them more than they learn skills. One in ten of apprentices around the country complain of overburden that they are subjected to live with all through their training period. Providing access to modern technological tools not only reduces the burden on the apprentices, but equips them for the digital economy that is in vogue round the globe.

5.3.4 A joint scheme between Government and Private Sector: The government can partner with private sectors to reform and support the apprenticeship program through funding and official recognition programs. With this the system is made more eye-catching and better through a partnership that aims at creating as many entrepreneurs as possible. The government can take advantage of this to empower more youths, eradicate poverty, and create more entrepreneurship opportunities for the youths. As a result, youth unemployment is solved and crime rates reduced.

5.3.5 Legal Framework: The Igbo apprenticeship program begins with an unofficial agreement between the parents or guardian of the apprentice, the master, and apprentice. Despite these agreements, the system is dotted with sad cases of breaches by either side because there is no legal framework to protect either side. It is often the case that some apprentices steal from their masters and do all sorts of harmful things that is against their initial agreements, on the other hand, the number of apprentices that were rendered useless, mistreated or subjected to slavish treatments, accused falsely of stealing or racketeering and as a result were never settled as the agreement were, are triple the amount of apprentices that were treated fairly. This study recommends that legal agreements be included into the Igbo apprenticeship system to protect all sides of the deal from unfair treatments later in the years.

These above recommendations are necessary to reshape and restructure what seems to be one of the best preserved and beneficial systems in Nigeria and indeed, Africa. These recommendations will further make the Igbo apprenticeship meet the global needs and attract more interest for the development of entrepreneurship, economic boom, and a better livelihood for the Nigerian people.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Kindly fill in the blank box Indicate your response as shown above

Section A: Demographical Data

1. Sex Male Female
2. Age: 18-30 years 31-45 years 45years and above
3. Education Qualifications: FSLC SSCE BSC/BA/HND
MSC PHD
4. Religion: Islam Christianity Traditional None
5. Marital Status: Single Married Divorced

Section B: Thematic Issues

Strongly agree, agree, disagree, or be neutral to the following item statements. This indicates your acceptance or rejection of the truthfulness of the statement under review here.

Research Question 1: How does the Igbo Apprenticeship address the problems of youth unemployment and continued violence in Nigeria?

Item 1: Igbo Apprenticeship is the best youth training model in Nigeria

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Item 2: Igbo Apprenticeship can help reduce unemployment in Nigeria

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Item 3: Igbo Apprenticeship can help reduce/eradicate violence and other negative traits among youths in Nigeria

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Research Question 2: How does the Igbo apprenticeship improve the lives and the social status of the individuals who partake in it?

Item 4: Igbo apprenticeship creates an opportunity for financial freedom and wealth creation

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Item 5: Igbo apprenticeship improves the social dynamics and social status of its graduates positively

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree

- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Item 6: Igbo apprenticeship is a sure path to a sustainable wealth and economic freedom.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Research Question 3: Is Igbo apprenticeship a perfect model, or does it require some modifications?

Item 7: Igbo apprenticeship needs improvement to suit the modern age

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Item 8: Igbo apprenticeship is perfect the way it is. It does not need any modifications

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Item 9: The disadvantages of Igbo apprenticeship system outweigh the advantages. Therefore it should be abandoned.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Item 10: Igbo apprenticeship can be better reformed when there are legal agreements and government support.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Neutral

Note Well: This is a Master’s Research on “Igbo Apprenticeship System and Its Role in Reshaping the Economic and Social Dynamics of Nigeria. Be assured that your data is completely protected and on no account will reveal your identity or data to the public. It is also a free exercise with no duress or force attached. Thank you for accepting to be part of the exercise.

Student's Biography

Date of Birth:	20th April, 1993
Place of Birth:	Nteje, Anambra State, Nigeria
Educational Qualifications:	
Primary Education:	Sacred Heart Nursery and Primary School, Nteje Community Nursery and Primary School, Nteje
Secondary Education:	Boys High School, Nteje All Hallows Seminary, Onitsha
Post-Secondary Education:	St. Pius IX Spiritual Year Seminary, Akwu-Ukwu
Bachelors:	Bachelor of Arts (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka) Bachelor of Philosophy (Pontifical Urbaniana University, Rome, Italy) Pope John Paul II Major Seminary, Okpunoh, Awka.
Master's Degree:	Masters of Peace Studies and Diplomacy (Siam University, Bangkok, Thailand)
Work Experiences:	Organizer/Co-Editor Onitsha Young Catholic Students
Assistant Manager:	St. Kizito Girls' Secondary School, Umudioka
Sales Representative	Edossa Communications, Maza-Maza, Lagos
Manager:	Charles Heerey International School, Onitsha
Teacher:	Mater Dei Group of School, Nkpor-Agu
CEO:	Mozico Group of Companies Nigeria Limited
CEO:	Our Child's Primal Foundation, Nigeria
CEO	Mozico Sports and IT facility Limited
CEO	Zino Unique Farms Limited
CEO	Kamala Haulage and Logistics Services Limited