

Mentorship And Wealth Creation: Analysing The Socio-Economic Impact Of The Igbo Apprenticeship System On Entrepreneurship In Nigeria

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Abstract

The Igbo apprenticeship system exemplifies a sustainable, grassroots approach to economic development and poverty alleviation. This model balances mentoring and practical business exposure and efforts at community-driven entrepreneurship. Therefore, this investigation elucidates the nexus between mentorship-and-wealth-creation, and the socio-cultural impacts of the Igbo apprenticeship system on entrepreneurship viability in Nigeria. In adopting a conceptual approach, the study therefore relied on literature data in its inference-making and conclusions. With the findings revealing that a major influence of the Igbo apprenticeship system is not only on entrepreneurship viability but it is also an enhanced form of mentorship and strategy for wealth creation. Thus concluding that that the Igbo apprenticeship system in Nigeria is a unique and effective model for economic empowerment, self-reliance, and poverty alleviation. While as a policy implication, this study offers that it will be beneficial to endear this system to become modernized through structured partnership with government and private sectors, providing legal frameworks, access to funding, and scalability while sustaining the core communal values.

Keywords: Apprenticeship system, Entrepreneurship, Mentorship, Wealth creation, Skill acquisition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has always been touted to be one of the best toolkits for creating wealth and developing entrepreneurship. Mentorship programmes or schemes all over the world have been critical in stimulating macroeconomic growth and equipping young entrepreneurs with the pre-requisite skillset, knowledge, and networks required for business success (Hamilton, 2011). Different economic models include mentorship as one of their essentials for sustainable development. Evidence has demonstrated that it plays an important role in poverty alleviation and economic empowerment (Monyei, Onyekwelu, Emmanuel & Taiwo, 2023; Ragins & Kram, 2007). Within their fold of economic policies and frameworks that advocate for entrepreneurship and wealth creation lies several national sub-programmes that promote mentorship. Countries with high advanced economic indicators like the United States and the United Kingdom mostly have structured initiatives on mentorship backed by government programmes and private sector initiatives. For instance, in the United States, the Small Business Administration (SBA) reduces unemployment through mentoring and funding avenues offered to start-up businesses (SBA, 2020). Such things happen also in Asian countries, a concrete example is China, where mentorship in business is channelled into expanding economy and acts as a vital component of its rapid growth in industrialization and business conglomerates (Liu & Almor, 2016). On the other hand, the world has used the conventional apprenticeship system to shape entrepreneurial success, and one of such systems is the German dual vocational training system, which integrates mentorship with skill acquisition (technical) to contribute highly to the strong industrial economy of the country (Eichhorst et al., 2015). Similar arrangements exist in Africa, but they usually do not take a formal structure, hence increasing difficulty in scaling their economic advantages. However, nations such as Ghana and South Africa are becoming increasingly involved in these activities as part of their economic policies to realize the great possibility of mentorship to entrepreneurship development and wealth creation (Amankwah-Amoah, 2016). In Nigeria, the Ibo Apprenticeship System (IAS), which is referred to locally as "Igba Boi", is a unique, native model for economy viability and wealth creation, with considerable contributions to business development. The model is informal, yet very well structured, and serves as an economic lifeblood for people residing in its Igbo-speaking parts in the South-eastern part of Nigeria (Eneh, 2010; Adama et al, 2024). Young apprentices known as "Nwa Boi" spend years under tutelage by some

established entrepreneurs learning the arts of trade, business ethics, and financial management. After completing the learning process, the mentor normally provides the necessary capital and business support to enable the apprentice establish their enterprise thereby engendering economic self-sufficiency and creation of jobs (Ukaegbu, 2003). Although it is an effective system, IAS also faces contemporary challenges, such as that of globalization, rural-urban movement, and preference for more formal education over traditional apprenticeship systems (Okoro & Chinweuba, 2017; Shafiu, et al, 2020; Godson, 2024). This system continues to remain a major propeller of economic growth and wealth distribution in Nigeria, thus enriching its entrepreneurial landscape while reducing youth unemployment (Edozie, 2019). The concept of "Igba-Boi," or Igbo apprenticeship, is especially exclusive to the Igbo people of southeast Nigeria. Many people have been able to turn their start-up funds and entrepreneurial abilities into successful firms through this localised system, which is recognised as a unique and effective model of wealth creation and mentoring. The system, however, is faced with threats to its sustainability and expansion throughout Africa due to its informal characteristic, the Igbo apprenticeship philosophy has great likelihood of abuse, irregularities, and the absence of regulation despite its history of success and positive socio-economic effects. There are documented cases of mentors failing to fulfil their pledges to the mentees, resulting in conflicts and eventual failure of settlement in most cases. It is a successful economic and wealth generation scheme which aids the reduction in youth unemployment, and this is very much confined to particular ethnic and cultural groups. Such limitation have hindered the larger concern about poverty, inequality, and youth unemployment in Africa. In addition, the model is not scalable and modernized as it has never been absorbed into the mainstream education and national policy. It is worthy of note that this system intercepts with gender equity as women are usually faced with cultural and institutional barriers in participation. This exclusion sow a seed of discord and acrimony amongst society members in the nation at large which further establishes greater economic inequality based on gender. Eniola (2020), and Omeje et al. (2020) claimed that owing to the lack of empirical data regarding the research theme, attempts to optimize and replicate this Igbo apprenticeship system and idea in other parts of the country have been problematic and in some cases, even thwarted. Therefore, this study probes into the voids in research by assessing the socio-economic impacts that such a system could avail on a more nationwide adoption when critically hypothesized. Therefore, using mentorship and wealth creation techniques to assess the socioeconomic effects of the Igbo apprenticeship system on entrepreneurship in Nigeria is relevant.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Social Capital Theory propounded by Bourdieu in 1986

The Social Capital Theory was used in this research. Bourdieu (1986) propounded the social capital concept in his essay "The Forms of Capital." He proposed that it is the sum of the resources, either real or potential, that come with having a long-lasting network of institutionalised ties. Coleman (1988) was strongly in favour of social capital's functional features, especially its capacity to facilitate social structures and create human capital. Putnam (1993, 2000) further extended this greatly in his article on "Making Democracy Work" in 1993, and "Bowling Alone" in 2000. He studied how the social networks and trust enhance the outcomes of society concerning civic engagement and community well-being. Based on these theorists' standpoints, this system is based upon mutual responsibility, trust and strong community nexus. Extended families and community networks are used and mentored to provide support to apprentices in return for loyalty and labour, while establishing a mutually beneficial relationship. In short, the Igbo apprenticeship system combines ancient values with contemporary socioeconomic concepts to provide a sustainable development model that promotes the development of entrepreneurs and the advancement of society.

The Concept of Igbo Apprenticeship System

The Igbo apprenticeship scheme also referred to as Igba-Odibo, Igba-Boi, Imu Ahia, or Imu-Oru, in Igbo dialect, describes formal and informal partnerships that encourage entrepreneurial ventures amongst the Igbo community (Onuoha, 2010). Originating from South-Eastern Nigeria, the scheme finances individuals through vocational training which promotes stability, economic development, and sustainable livelihoods (Iwara et al., 2019; Obi, 2020). The Igbo apprenticeship system, which has been revived as "Igba-Odibo" or "Imu-Ahia," has a long history and is deeply ingrained in the socioeconomic structure of the Igbo people in southeast Nigeria. Under this traditional system, young people are taught by seasoned business owners, who

are referred to as "Ogas." Ezeajughu (2021) and Okwuowulu (2022) posited that it was a realistic means of internationalizing one's access to Nigeria's commercial supremacy. This greatly contributed to developing the market for vehicle spare parts in Nigeria's Eastern zones. The Igbo apprenticeship program has a long and well-known history of serving as a catalyst for the creation of new businesses and the economic establishment of entrepreneurs, according to Nnonyelu et al. (2023) and Abubakar et al. (2019). The primary aim of this method is to inculcate the business acumen and practical abilities through which entrepreneurial success can be achieved (Arisi-Nwugballa & Mammah, 2024; Familoni, 2024). Although it was in place prior to colonisation, this apprenticeship system developed over time to facilitate the passing down of skills, information, and culture from one generation to the next. It did diversify education; while it was not a formal classroom degree oriented system, it was very relevant to trade entrepreneurship and self-sustenance in Igbo community affairs. During the trade with Europeans, in the course of their contacts with traders, many Igbos found out different forms of entrepreneurship from the transatlantic slave trades. Yet this strengthened and increased the entrepreneurial drive among the Igbo to have various ventures before colonialism. Then, the Igbos were largely artisans, traders, and merchants during colonization, were exporters of palm oil and kernels which has certainly induced and sustained an enterprising culture amongst them. The richness of the Igbo culture and tradition is been manifested in its apprenticeship system which has proven to be instrumental in the wealth generation and economic sustainability of the people. Successful entrepreneurs would promote financial independence and community support by mentoring and establishing their apprentices.

The Igbo apprenticeship, features distinct and systematic stages, such as:

- i. Talent identification – a stage where a young person shows interest in learning a trade, an agreement is made between the master and the apprentice's family. This phase includes a trial period for compatibility assessment.
- ii. Mentoring Stage - the apprentice learns the basic trade requirements in terms of its technical, managerial, and interpersonal skills during this stage. It builds a good work ethic for real-life experience at this period.
- iii. Settlement Stage - after an apprenticeship period, the master gives his apprentice cash or materials for starting up his independent business (Obunike, 2016 & Iwara, et al, 2019). This settlement strengthens the cycle of prosperity and mentoring in the community. This method, besides being a model for wealth creation while reducing poverty, it has played pivotal roles in the promotion of entrepreneurship and economic development among the Igbo people.

Increasing attention has been given in recent years toward modernizing the Igbo apprenticeship system to meet new economic realities. Recommendations include a standardization of training, formalizing components of education, and creating legal frameworks to protect apprentice rights. These reforms intend to make the system more efficient in dealing with the modern economy's opportunities and challenges. The Igbo apprenticeship system is a collective way of entrepreneurship that has stood the test of time. It also remains a testament to the determination and creativity of the Igbo people.

Categories of Igbo apprenticeship System in Nigeria

These categories range from the enhancement of economic development to entrepreneurial spirit among the Igbo in Nigeria. The Igbo apprenticeship system has three (3) categories:

Igba-boi (Igba Odibo): The most common category, in which an apprentice works for a master (the *Oga*) for two to seven years but receives free training for a specified length. This period, an apprentice learns the functioning and operations of the master's business. The master is to be studied and trained by the apprentice for the delay in the gratification of the same as it pertains to teaching patience, self-discipline, and humility, in preparation for future endeavours. With this arrangement, an apprentice, who is usually a youth, works under his master for a stipulated period without remuneration (Okeke & Dimonye, 2024). It is then that the apprentice gets hands-on experience in the profession and learns the finer details of it. When he finishes this programme, the master then gives him money and requisite resources and supplies he will need to establish himself as an independent business owner.

Imu Oru (Imu Oruaka): This category is specifically more concentrated on learning a particular talent or craft. The apprentice or his family pays the master for training unlike the Igba-boi. Such aptitude related activities are like electronics repair, welding, motor mechanics, blacksmithing, among others in which the apprentice does not live with the master. The terms and duration are predetermined (Okeke & Dimonye,

2024). In this type, the apprentice pays the master to acquire a certain type of craft or skill, and the master teaches the practical aspects and how to perform such activities and skills further helping the apprentice to navigate and tackle any challenges that may arise in the craft overtime.

Imu Ahia: The focus of this type is apprenticeship is learning the arts of basic trade and commerce and to pay the master for learning the operations of the trade. It covers negotiation skills, customer interactions, and general awareness of the market dynamics. The Imu-Ahia form of apprenticeship is all about teaching the trainees these skills because some apprentices work in sales and business administration, where principles like honesty, responsibility, and work ethics are crucial. This is in line with Osiri (2020), Yemi (2021), and Ukwueze (2021) who assert that the Igbos take principles such as working hard, sacrifice, honesty and integrity, generosity and co-prosperity, and truth and direction very seriously. They know that these are what sustains the viability of any business and therefore mentor these mentees accordingly. The apprenticeship programme of the Igbo people most essentially provides real business networking, also offers a less susceptibility to business uncertainties, lower transaction costs associated with market uncertainties, develops and uses social capital, avails access to credit without collateral, advances mutual and collective business operations, and creates jobs. Two years before the apprenticeship ends, the apprentice is placed under minimal supervision by the master, which is almost like an exam. Unlike the igba-boyi, an apprentice does not live with the master as in the case of Imu Oru. The apprentice would thus be involved in a graduation ceremony at the end of the training period for Nwa-boyi (the person who learns a trade). The apprentice's monetary compensation during the years of being trained would then be paid into a lump sum based on how the apprentice performs and connects with the mentor. The Nwa-boyi is expected to put the money into the business. Most Igbo businesses start-up in this manner.

Mentorship in the Igbo Apprenticeship System

Young inducted apprentices learn a specific trade or craft under the guidance of an expert, in this way of learning and developing oneself within a trade-based mentorship. It has become popular around the world for its sustainability and success as a model for economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. Mentoring is the basis for the apprentice system among the Igbo people. That is the relationship between an apprentice and a mentor on the foundation of mutual respect, discipline, and trust. In addition to imparting practical work-related skills, the mentor teaches the apprentice how to deal with life situations and nurtures a sense of personal accountability (Nkemdirim & Obi, 2020). The mentor, on the one hand, provides the apprentice with shelter and food while undergoing the apprenticeship, while on the other hand, he assumes the apprentice's financial, social, and moral responsibilities. This period although varies, is generally between five and seven years. At the completion of the training duration, the mentor uses a process known as "Settlement" to give the apprentice a financial settlement, and with this capital, the apprentice will establish his or her business entity.

Skill Acquisition and Practical Training

In the Igbo apprenticeship system, learning skills is experiential. Apprentices pick up knowledge through participation, observation, and eventually practical application. As noted by Obi-Anike, Igwe, Monyei, Kelvin-Iloafu, Nnabugwu and Ukpere (2023), and Okonkwo (2021) the training covers a wide range of sectors within an economy, including manufacturing, service delivery, craftsmanship, and trading. This approach, which is in line with contemporary educational theories of experiential learning, places more emphasis on practical application than traditional education, which frequently stresses theoretical knowledge (Iheduru, 1999; Kolb, 1984). Soft skills like money management, negotiation, and client interactions are also taught during the apprenticeship time. Apprentices are guaranteed to be proficient in their trade and equipped to run enterprises successfully via the blending of soft and practical skills. Practical learning is given precedence over theoretical education in the Igbo apprenticeship system. Apprentices participate in day-to-day business operations while gaining knowledge of client relations, inventory control, and negotiating (Onwuchekwa, 2019). They gain capabilities relevant to the trade and gain a thorough understanding of market dynamics over time. Apprentices can learn by concentration on the practical approach, which gives them the competence and self-assurance they need to succeed in challenging corporate settings. Modern pedagogical models that emphasize learning by tangible experiences, like Kolb's experiential learning model (Kolb, 1984), are consistent with this type of experiential learning.

Socio-Economic Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship

The aspect of social history that gives the Igbo people a feeling of social and economic identity is the Imuru, or apprenticeship system. This unique system has also offered skill acquisition and training for the Igbo people. However, it has built a strong kinship, economic stability, and entrepreneurship among the Igbo people themselves. It has, indeed, complemented much in making businesses in Nigeria and the poverty reduction agenda. It has facilitated economic growth and job creation through making people economically self-reliable. A study by Okoro and Obioha (2021) found that the Igbo apprenticeship system is the origin of more than 60% of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in South-east Nigeria. By training new apprentices, successful business owners frequently reinvest in their communities, establishing a cyclical paradigm of development and growth. The apprenticeship system has been crucial to wealth distribution and economic empowerment in Igbo communities. By equipping apprentices with the necessary tools and skills to launch their own enterprises, the system generates economic activity that reduces poverty and provides jobs. Chukwuemeka (2022) argues that the apprenticeship system is an essential tool for economic growth and nation-building since it promotes financial independence and community support among the communities. By encouraging independence and lowering unemployment, the apprenticeship programme advances socio-economic development. It also avails young adults who might not have access to formal education a shot at enhanced economic prospects, thereby acting as a safety net (Monyei et al., 2023). The system's focus on community support and mentorship cultivates an entrepreneurial culture that spans generations. As stated by Arawa & Ahmed (2023) and Chukwuemeka (2022), the IAS is essential to the socio-economic advancement of the Igbo people in Nigeria. While also acting as a system that tackles the mismatch and skill gap that have afflicted Nigeria's official vocational training system.

Key Success Factors of the Igbo Apprenticeship System IAS

Despite the lack of written agreements or legal paperwork to govern the system, the IAS model has shown to be highly successful over time. Some of the elements that guarantee the system's success are listed below:

- The trainee understands that the success of the master's business determines his own success in life. To guarantee the succession of the master's business, he thus makes every effort and manages it with care and responsibility (Monyei, Ukpere, Agbaeze, Omonona, Kelvin-Iloafu, & Obi-Anike, 2021).
- Okoro (2018) asserts that the apprentice avoids any actions that could result in the termination of the apprenticeship because they worry that the arrangement may be ended in the event of an established act of theft, diversion, or wasteful use of the master's funds.
- The master feels compelled to settle the apprentice rather than fire him on thin pretences or neglect to do so at the end of the agreed-upon tenure because of the fear of a damaged reputation and the ensuing consequences.
- Chinweuba and Ezeugwu (2017) proposed a cultural element that motivates the apprentice to serve the master faithfully. He claims that the Igbo cosmological notion that underpins the apprentice's loyalty to the master is encapsulated in the well-known Igbo proverb "onye fee Eze, Ezeeruo ya aka," which translates to "he who serves the king shall be king thereafter." As a result, the apprentice serves the master faithfully in the hopes of receiving the same service in the future.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to clarify the socioeconomic effects of the Igbo apprenticeship system on entrepreneurship in Nigeria, this study employs the conceptual analysis of the literature, examining wealth creation and mentoring as key elements. Considering the social capital theory's tenets, the socioeconomic effects of the Igbo apprenticeship programme on entrepreneurship, and an examination of the fundamental classifications of the Igbo apprenticeship system in Nigeria. It further examined the role of mentorship in the Igbo apprenticeship system, skill acquisition and practical training schemes, and lastly, the key success factors of the Igbo apprenticeship system. As these gave significant insights into the study's inference-making and forming the basis for its findings and policy implications.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study employs a narrative analysis approach. Drawing from prior empirical research findings and the conceptual overview of the study, it reveals that a major influence of the Igbo apprenticeship system is not only on entrepreneurship viability but it is an enhanced form of mentorship and a strategy for wealth creation. Clarifying the connection between mentoring and wealth creation, as well as the sociocultural impacts of the Igbo apprenticeship system on the viability of entrepreneurship in Nigeria, is the result. The assessment of the Igbo apprenticeship system and the socioeconomic development of modern Igbo youths: an ethical rethink by Afunugo and Molokwu (2024) provided support for this conclusion. The investigation, which drew information from oral interviews and a thorough examination of the body of relevant literature, revealed that the Igbo apprenticeship system had made a substantial contribution to the social and cultural advancement of Igbo communities. However, the practice's apparent difficulties appear to be caused by the malevolent attitudes of both masters and apprentices towards the correct implementation of the agreement's terms and the rules of its engagement. In order to promote relevance in the socioeconomic development of contemporary Igbo youths, the Igbo apprenticeship system remains crucial, particularly for the development of the human potential of today's Igbo youth. As such some ethical guidelines suggested for reviving the Igbo apprenticeship system must have the inclusion of practical religiosity, fair compensation, accountability, transparency, and community involvement. This would also address youth restlessness in South-east Nigeria, which is mostly caused by high unemployment rates that significantly impede Igbo youths' socio-economic advancement.

Additionally, Agama and Ohajionu (2021) examined the consequences for employment creation and entrepreneurial education in developing nations, as well as the limitations of the Igbo apprenticeship system. The Model approach for designing conceptual studies was the research design/approach employed in the inquiry, as this method seeks to discover new relationships between phenomena, formulating theoretical hypotheses that reveals new constructs, their relationships and clarifying the cause of an event's result. Results revealed that despite the implications of adapting IAS, it has greatly influenced start-ups' failure rates but has also increased business start-ups rates invariably, and is spearheading national economic growth and development. The study thus concluded that for almost a century, evidence of job and wealth creation has existed within entrepreneurial education, and has aided in addressing macroeconomic issues such as unemployment and widespread poverty, therefore to curb this issues requires systems such the Igbo apprenticeship.

The function of Igbo traditional business schools in fostering entrepreneurial aptitude and drive in Nigeria was examined by Agu and Nwachukwu (2020). The potential and entrepreneurial spirit of the Igbo Traditional Business School (ITBS) in Nigeria, a rapidly rising African economy, are further highlighted by this study. The data set included 122 micro-entrepreneurs (Welders) who finished the ITBS, and the sample was purposefully chosen. With reference to SPSS version 23's Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA), findings show that entrepreneurial potential and intention are positive and significant attributes to the ITBS. Based on the experiences that come with running a business, it also suggests that mentors operating under the ITBS's auspices should instill in their mentees certain qualities that generate desirability, feasibility, propensity to act, and entrepreneurial ambition.

In another study, Chinweuba and Ezeugwu (2017) conducted an analytical investigation of the ontological underpinnings of Igbo entrepreneurship. The study's main goal was to analyse some of the unusual factors, situations, and abilities that have contributed to the rise in socioeconomic success within the Igbo culture. Because of their traditional beliefs and perseverance, the Igbo are socioeconomically viable, according to the study's findings. Thus concluding that the deep-rooted customs and belief structures of the Igbos provide the framework for their economic-related values and their resulting entrepreneurial capability.

Additionally, Chukwuka and Abgbele (2024) studied the Igbo apprenticeship system as a model for wealth generation, sustainability, and expansion through entrepreneurial strategy. The paper explored and analysed the related literature using qualitative and analytical approaches. Indications from the study highlights the apprenticeship model of the Igbos to influence sustainable wealth creation, social development, and economic advancement. Therefore, concluding that the ancient cultural practice of the Igbo apprenticeship system has been established as an important pathway for affording skills, knowledge, and values from one

generation to another, making it a crucial factor influencing wealth creation, sustainability, and strategic entrepreneurial growth for the South-East region and Nigeria as a nation.

Ekesiobi and Dimnwobi's (2020) investigation into the Igbos' entrepreneurial practices in Southeast Nigeria is also noteworthy. To examine 1187 survey responses from the Onitsha and Nnewi business clusters in Anambra State, the study used a quantitative methodology. Propensity score matching (PSM) was used to link treatment and control units based on similar propensity score features and other possible study criteria. The study found that despite non-Igbo entrepreneurs having better access to formal financing sources, the Igbo entrepreneurs however had higher rates of business sustainability, growth, through their access to trade and informal financing.

Finally, Onyima, Nzewi, and Chiekezie (2013) investigated how social capital and apprenticeship affected Igbo entrepreneurs' ventures to start new businesses in Wukari, Taraba State. The questionnaire served as the data collection tool, and 40 Igbo-owned businesses in Wukari Local Government Area were selected at random. Results indicated that social capital becomes imperative once the business commences and even more so apprenticeship had a great impact on pre-foundation of business activities during start-ups. The study concludes that while social capital avails information to entrepreneurship, apprenticeship has a major effect on the formation, location, and financing of the business ideas. Thus recommending that modernization and revitalizing apprenticeship should be encouraged, and that there is a need to legalize ethnic unions and restructure them to perform social and economic activities.

5. CONCLUSION

Nigeria's socio-economic growth has been influenced significantly by the apprenticeship system popularly referred to as Imu-Ahia, and practiced amongst the Igbos. This system has contributed enormously to reducing unemployment and poverty through the provision of mentorship and wealth creations capabilities given to apprentices, commonly called Nwa Boy. With these requisite skills, finances/capital, and the business acumen necessary to establish self-owned businesses, these individuals have gone on to fully independence and economic liberation. Its multiplier effect, with which it channels job growth and wealth dispersal, has yielded productive dividends. There are, however, certain challenges of the system been experienced, ranging from abuse of apprentices, informal institutions, and competition from formal schooling. Regardless, its continued relevance hinges on adapting to the new corporate environments especially, with the infusion of technology in training and operations. Hence, a major outstanding and indigenous forms of both entrepreneurship and economic development is the Igbo apprenticeship system: with improved modernization and formal recognition, it can be a case of reference for dealing with unemployment and sustained growth across nations.

Policy Implications

An example of communal entrepreneurship in Nigeria is the Igbo system of apprenticeship. To ensure its sustainability and effectiveness, there should be need to integrate contemporary business practices, technology, and digital tools into the apprenticeship system to enable apprentices stay competitive in the evolving business environment. Providing formal training in financial management, marketing, and technology alongside traditional mentorship ensures a holistic approach. There should be need for structured agreements; formalizing terms of service between mentors (masters) and apprentices with clear expectations, timelines, and benefits as these would enhance trust and accountability. This is because written agreements help prevent disputes and ensure mutual respect. Furthermore, apprentices often require capital to start their businesses after completing the programme, it is therefore appropriate for governments, NGOs, and/or financial institutions to collaborate through the provision of micro-loans tailored for apprentices transitioning to independent entrepreneurs. It is also worth stating, that the apprenticeship system's impact can be far reaching in its scope if it is acknowledged as a national model and incorporated into official economic frameworks. The apprenticeship system can also be given priority and funding via policies that promote skill acquisition, small enterprises, and vocational training. Hence, it is essential to uphold the cultural norms of discipline, efforts of working hard, and trust that forms the foundation of the system, as

this will maintain the scheme's productivity and poverty alleviation for families, communities, and traditional institutions.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Haven contributed to the discourse on the Igbo apprenticeship system using mentorship, wealth creation, and analysing its socio-economic impact on entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Future researchers are advised to conduct a comparative analyses, using contract agreement and settlement rates to examine their influence on the Igbo Apprenticeship System. Also, extend the geographical scopes to other regions. As this will make for a more generalisation of the research findings and applicability.

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