JETMASE
Journal of Emerging Trends in Management Sciences and Entrepreneurship
Volume 7(2), Pages 368 - 377 December, 2025
ISSN: 2384-762X
https://www.jetmase.com

Apprenticeship in Igbo Land as A Panacea for Entrepreneurial Development in Anambra State

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ABSTRACT: The study examined Apprenticeship in Igbo land as a panacea for Entrepreneurial development in Anambra State. The objectives of the study were to: Examine the effect of apprenticeship training system on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State; Investigate the effect of apprenticeship skill acquisition on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State. The study was anchored on Skill Acquisition Theory. The study adopted survey method of research. Data were generated through primary and secondary sources. The method for data collection was questionnaire, which was administered randomly amongst business owners and operators. The population of the study was 4212; the sample size of the study was eight hundred and nine (809). While seven hundred and forty-two (742) were retrieved. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regression method at 0.05% level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that Apprenticeship training system has Entrepreneurial development in Anambra State (t-test, 3.657,p-0.000). Apprenticeship skill acquisition has significant effect on Entrepreneurial development in Anambra State (t-test, 3.592, ,p-0.000). The study recommended that, there is need for adequate provision and regulations on the seed capital for the Igbo apprenticeship system. Stakeholders should equally support successfully graduated apprentices to gain a foothold in their new businesses. For Small business sustainability, apprentices should further undergo appropriate traditional business training after service to obtain necessary skills and experiences.

Keywords: Apprenticeship, Igbo land, Entrepreneurial development, Apprenticeship training system, and apprenticeship skill acquisition

INTRODUCTION

Apprenticeship as a method of establishing young people, and training the unskilled, has been very beneficial to the Igbos. Many people achieved excellence in their calling because their Oga trained and settled them well in the trade they learnt (Atueyi, & Mbanefo 2025). Many notable business moguls in Onitsha, Nnewi and many parts of Igbo land attribute their success to what they learnt as apprentice. Admittedly, apprenticeship offers the ‘’Nwaboyi’ the opportunity to acquire business acumen, work attitude and ethics on how to deal with suppliers and customers, and interaction with other practitioners and colleagues. It provides contacts/networks and lessens the burden on the Nwaboyi’s parents. In addition, it has helped youths from indigent homes to achieve financial success and excellence in what they do (Ejiofor, & Otika, 2024). In the

apprenticeship system, the 'Oga' (master or Boss) and 'Nwaboyi' (servant or apprentice) are in agreement for a period ranging from 4-7 years (and sometimes longer) whereby the apprentice is to serve and learn from the 'Oga'. Usually, the mode of settlement is contained in the agreement (Godson, 2024).

The Igbo Apprentice and Apprenticeship programme have been given diverse explanations by various schools of thought and scholars (Mua. 2024). The programme entails more of engaging individual or a person that has decided to embark and learn a specific skill or job by working for a fixed period of time, for someone who is very good at that job or skill (Omede, & Chukwu, 2024). The Apprentice can be a teenager or young person, male or female that embarks on learning or receiving practical training skills, and also sometimes theoretical knowledge in a specialized area of vocation, trade or occupation he/she has chosen to trade on for a period of time. For apprenticeship, some have suggested that it is an effective mechanism for easy learning transition for young people to move from school base approach to the world of work or other tasks associated with such (Kekeocha, & Nnabuife, 2024).

The other way round, the apprenticeship generally has been described as dedicated and enabling form of vocational education (technical, vocational, or artificial intelligence) combining both job learning and school-based training for specifically defined competences, skills, capacities and work processes (Olusegun, & Olanrewaju, 2017). This should be regulated by law and based on written patterns of employment and contract with a reward system or payments, and standards that operates with social protection scheme. More often, issuance of certificate and dedicated recognition follows the expiration of training where relevant certificates, licensing are awarded to successful apprenticeship fellows. A critical look at the following explanations of apprenticeship somehow does not speak directly to the Igbo style of apprenticeship program, however, certain elements and features are shared in them. The Igbo type as it is currently does not have any affiliation to schools, universities or colleges, though this is where we aim in the nearest future from now. The Igbo apprenticeship model and programme is the brain behind the existence and consistent operations of small scale businesses across Igbo land (Diyoke, 2014)..

The Igbo Apprenticeship programme and activities have been observed to be a sine qua non for the economy of Nigeria and the quality of life of the people at both rural and urban settings Apprenticeship is a system for training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training (Eze, 2023). Apprenticeships can also enable practitioners to gain a license to practice in a regulated occupation (Fajobi, Olatujoye, Amusa, & Adedoyin. (2017). Ifechukwu-Jacobs (2023) expatiated further that apprenticeship may also take the form of helping new employees to relate their previous education to the requirement of their new job. Apprenticeship also incorporates a system of guidance and counseling as most apprentices are required to live with their masters so as to acquire through a process of acculturation the necessary altitude, diplomacy and decorum required for the job.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate Apprenticeship in Igbo land as a panacea for Entrepreneurial development in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the effect of training system on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State

2. Investigate the effect of apprenticeship skill acquisition on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State

1.3 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the objectives of the study and strengthen the analysis:

Ho: Training system has no significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State

Ho: Apprenticeship skill acquisition has no significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Skill Acquisition Theory

The fundamental claim of Skill Acquisition Theory of Dekeyser (2007), "is that the learning of a wide variety of skills shows an exceptional similarity in development from introductory representation of knowledge through starting changes in conduct to eventual fluent, unconstrained, to a great extent, and profoundly gifted behaviour, and that this phenomena can be accounted for by a lot of essential principles regular to acquisition of skills". Overall, as referenced by Speelman (2005), skill acquisition can be considered as a particular type of learning, where learning has been characterized as "the representation of information in memory concerning some natural or psychological event". Thus, as indicated by him, skill acquisition is a type of learning where "skilled behaviours can become routinized and even programmed under certain conditions". What is more, as a general theory of learning, it guarantees that an adult starts learning something through largely unequivocal procedures, and with subsequent adequate practice and exposure, move into verifiable procedures.

This work is anchored on Skill Acquisition Theory. Skill acquisition is one of several competing theories of how we learn new languages. It's a theory based on the idea that skilled behaviour in any area can become routinized and even automatic under certain conditions through repeated pairing of stimuli and responses. Acquired skills can help you progress in your current role and potentially find new career opportunities. This path of development may also help keep you current in continuously changing work environments and practices. Some benefits of acquiring skills include: Building confidence and a sense of achievement.

Empirical Review

Okeke and Osang (2021) examined Igbo apprenticeship scheme in Anambra state. Its potency as it was, as it is and will be. The principal motivations of the scheme are the seed capital and mentorship given to the apprentices at the end of their indentureship and generation of employment in the state. But, the potency of the scheme is perceived to be waning. The study therefore seeks to interrogate the perceived decline of the potency of the scheme, utilizing the observation method in informal workplaces and trading sites spread across the state. The study discovered that, the unwillingness of young men to take up the businesses of their fathers, study courses that will promote their growth and malicious stealing of their masters money by the apprentices are key factors that led to the decline of the scheme's potency and the study therefore recommended that young men should key into family businesses so as to promote the heritage of business sustainability being transferred from generation to generation. Again, there should be a well- defined contractual agreement rather than oral agreement between the masters and the intending apprentices so as to protect the job creation intent of the scheme.

Adesola (2019) examined the relationships between the compensation-tied apprenticeship practice and employment generation among the Ibo businessmen in Osun state with a view to determine a sustainable way of propagating a viable business which will invariably reduce the level of unemployment in the Nation Primary data were extensively used for this study and Simple percentage Method with Analysis of Variance used to analysis the collected data.. Three businesses namely-electrical goods, mobile phone accessories and motor parts were randomly selected and the sampled businesses were examined base on capacity building and continuity of the apprentices in this method of apprenticeship. The findings of the study revealed that majority 92% of the apprentices that are trained under this method of compensation-tied apprenticeship continued in the business they learnt while only 24% of those that learnt under other forms of apprenticeships continued in the business. The p-value of (0.0001) as against P-value of 0.00062 showed that compensation- tied apprenticeships are more reliable and viable in reducing unemployment rates in the study area. The study therefore concludes that compensation-tied type of apprenticeships would reduce unemployment palaver if given adequate attentions.

Ifechukwu-Jacobs, Arinze, & Nwangwu, & Atueyi, (2025) The study analyzed the financial literacy and its impact on youth entrepreneurship in South East Nigeria. The objective of the study was to; ascertain the effect of financial knowledge, financial behaviour and financial expertise on youth entrepreneurship in South East Nigeria. Three research hypotheses are formulated in line with the above objectives of the study. Descriptive survey design method was used; Structured questionnaire were use to gather information from the population. The population of the study is made of youths from age 20-39 in South East zone of Nigeria, which is 50,222,32 target population. It comprises of all the youths in South East Nigeria, while the sample size is 399 were gotten through taro yamane formular. The researcher distributes three hundred and ninety-nine (399) questionnaires but only three hundred and seventy-three (373) copies of questionnaire were retrieved. Correlation and t-test method of data analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The finding of the study shows that; Financial knowledge has significant positive effect on youth entrepreneurship in South East Nigeria. Financial behaviour has significant positive effect on youth entrepreneurship in South East Nigeria.

Nwangwu, Ohanyere, Nwangwu, & Atueyi, (2025) examined the effect of artificial intelligent (AI) on decision-making in supply chain management of lubricant firms in Anambra state, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Technology Acceptance Theory (TAT). A structure questionnaire was developed for data collection. The population of the study comprised of 281 management staff from thirteen (13) lubricant firms in Anambra State. Two hundred and sixty-nine (269) were duly filled and returned data was analysed using correlation analysis with the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23. Findings from the study show that. Machine learning has significant effect on decision support system on supply chain management of lubricant firms in Anambra state (T=2.244, P=0.006). Neural networks has significant effect on creative decision skill on supply chain management of lubricant firms in Anambra state (T=9.790, P=0.009). The study concludes that AI-powered predictive analytics improved decision-making in supply chain management in lubricant firms in Anambra state, Nigerian.

Ohanyere, Arinze, & Atueyi (2025) Investigated the digital cyberspace cost on

firm performance of deposit money bank using data for the period of 2012-2023. Panel least squared (PLS) method of data analysis was adopted because of its Best Linear Unbiased Estimators (BLUE) properties. The data for the variables used was sourced from annual report of the selected deposit money bank in Nigeria. The variables were on cyber security maintenance cost and cyber security acquisition cost. The study adopted the descriptive statistics, correlation approach, as well as panel least square. E- View software was used for the analysis. The study found that Cyber security maintenance cost has significant effect on performance of deposit money bank in Nigeria. (t-test 3.491757, p=0.0008). Cyber security acquisition cost has no significant effect on performance of deposit money bank in Nigeria. (t-test 0.959399, p=0.3405).

Ifechukwu-jacobs, & Atueyi, (2024) Material management and productivity of Nigeria bottling appraised the material management and productivity of Nigerian Bottling Company. The study adopted survey method of research. Data were generated through primary and secondary sources. The method for data collection was questionnaire which was administered randomly among the staff of Nigerian Bottling Company. The population of the study was 288 staff. while two hundred and seventy (270) questionnaires were retrieved. The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis method at 0.05% level of significance. The findings of the study revealed, Planning has a significant effect on productivity in Bottling Companies in Onitsha given its F-value of 14.027. Material procurement has a significant effect on productivity in Bottling Companies in Onitsha given its F-value of 33.048. Logistic has a significant effect on productivity in Bottling Companies in Onitsha given its F-value of 9.418. Stock and waste control has a significant effect on productivity in Bottling Companies in Onitsha.

Onya, Arinze, & Atueyi, (2025) examined job satisfaction and employee's performance among the staff of private universities in Anambra state. The study investigated the relationship between reward, career development, staff training and recognition on employee performance. Relevant theoretical and empirical literatures were reviewed. The study was anchored on Herberg's throry. The study collected data from primary and secondary sources. The population of the study comprised 478 staff of private universities in Anambra state. Formulated hypothesis were tested, using ANOVA. From the analysis, it was discovered that: Reward has significant effect on employee's performance amongst the staff of private universities in Anambra state**.** Career advancement has significant effect on employee's performance, amongst the staff of private universities in Anambra state. Training has significant effect on employees' performance amongst the staff of private universities in Anambra state.

METHODOLOGY

The study used primary data: These consist of all the data and information obtained personally from respondents through interviews and the use of questionnaire. They are primary in nature because they have not been published elsewhere. The population for the study comprised of business owners who have been in the business from 5 years upwards the study chose three markets from the three senatorial zones in Anambra state which are Nnewi Spare Parts Markets, (1,467) Onitsha Main Market, (1,545) and Eke Awka (1200). This gave a total of 4212 population as shown in the table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 number of the selected population

s/n	Market	Population
1	Nnewi spare parts markets	1,467
2	Onitsha main market	1545
3	Eke Awka	1200
	Total	**4212**

Sources: Survey 2025

Determination of Sample Size.

The sample size for this study was determined by using the Borg & Gall formular of (1973). Statistically, the Borg & Gall (1973) formular for sample size is given by:

$n = (Zx)^2(e)\,[N]$
$(Zx)^2$ = Confidence level at 0.05
n = 1.960
e = Error of margin (0.05)
N = Population of Interest = 4212
X = Significance Level

Given the nature of this study, it was difficult to cover the entire population of (4212), so a fair representative sample of the population therefore was considered imperative. Accordingly, the sample size for the study was determined by using the Borg & Gall (1973) formular for calculating sample size as follows:

$n = (1.960)^2\,(0.05)\,[4212]$
$n = (1.960)^2\,(0.05)\,[4212]$
$n = (3.8461)\,(210.6)$
$= 809.988 \Longrightarrow 809$
$n = 809$

Sampling Technique

The researcher adopted simple random sampling. Using this method, stratification of the employees was strictly based on the idea that all the business owners have equal choice of being selected. Thus random sampling ensures that units of the sample are selected on the basis of chance and all units have an equal chance of being included in the sample.

Method of Data Analysis.

Statistics such as frequency count and percentages were put to use in the analysis of research questions while hypotheses were tested using multiple regression. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Analysis was carried out with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Decision rule: We will accept Ho, if p-value is greater than 5% level of significance; otherwise we will reject Ho, to accept Hi

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Eight hundred and nine (809) were administered, among the business owners in Nnewi spare parts markets, Eke market and Onitsha main market in Anambra state**.** However, seven hundred and forty-two (742) questionnaires were retrieved. Therefore the

analysis and interpretation of data were only based on the returned questionnaire. The validity and reliability of this study is highly ensured, despite the number of questionnaire not returned.

4.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression result was employed to test the effect of independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The result of the multiple regression analysis is presented in the tables below:

Table 4.1.1 Summary of the Regression Result .

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.673[a]	.524	.513	.96254	.224	20.844	4	289	.000	1.820

a. Predictors: (Constant), ATS, ASA,
b. Dependent Variable: ED

Table 4.1.1 shows that R^2 which measures the strength of the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable have the value of 52%. This implies that 52% of the variation in entrepreneurial development is explained by variations in seed capital, mentorship, apprenticeship training skill and apprenticeship skill acquisition. This was supported by adjusted R^2 of 51%. In order to check for autocorrelation in the model, Durbin-Watson statistics was employed. Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.820 in table 3 shows that the variables in the model are not auto correlated and that the model is reliable for predications.

4.1.2

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	77.244	4	19.311	20.844	.000[b]
	Residual	267.752	289	.926		
	Total	344.997	293			

a. Dependent Variable: ED
b. Predictors: (Constant), ATS, ASA,

The f-statistics value of 20.844 in table 4.1.2 with f-statistics probability of 0.000 shows that the independent variables has significant effect on dependent variables such as apprenticeship skill acquisition, and apprenticeship training system, can collectively explain the variations in top entrepreneurial development.

4.1.3

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.050	.347		3.024	.003
	ATS	.215	.059	.230	3.657	.000
	ASA	.089	.056	.101	3.592	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ED

A'priori Criteria: This is determined by the existing business theories; it also indicates the signs and magnitude of the business parameter under review. Apprenticeship training system (ATS) has a positive sign and its value as 0.215; this implies that a unit increases in Apprenticeship training system (ATS) increase the entrepreneurial development by .215%; this conforms to a' priori expectation. Lastly it was observed that apprenticeship skill acquisition (ASA) has positive sign and its value as 0.089 this implies that a unit increase in apprenticeship skill acquisition increases entrepreneurial development by 3%.

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

Here, the two hypotheses formulated were tested using t-statistics and significance value of the individual variables in the regression result. The essence of this is to ascertain how significant are the effect of individual independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables.

4.2.1 Test of Hypothesis One

Ho: Apprenticeship training system has no significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State.

Apprenticeship training system has a t-statistics of 3.657 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Apprenticeship training system has significant positive effect on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State

4.2.2 Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho: Apprenticeship skill acquisition has no significant effect on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State.

Apprenticeship skill acquisition has a t-statistics of 3.592 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses and conclude that Apprenticeship skill acquisition has significant positive effect on entrepreneurial development in Anambra State

CONCLUSION

This study has succeeded in bringing to the limelight the different roles apprenticeship and social capital play in business development as well as the stages when and where they are needed. The entrepreneurial performance of Igbo people from ancient to contemporary times is dynamic and continuous. But Igbo entrepreneurs have also been successful because of their practice of right business strategy and effectiveness. These practices are however propelled by their cultural and traditional values, worldview, economic value and other essential historical factors. Igbo entrepreneurs have not only dominated Nigerian commerce and economy but that of other countries such as Ghana, Niger, Togo, Gambia, Mali, Cameroun, China, South Africa, to mention but a few. It is interesting to know that the process of entrepreneurial development involves the entrepreneurs, families and the entire society who promote entrepreneurship culture. However, the study made the following recommendations:

1. For small business sustainability, apprentices should continually undergo more appropriate traditional and formal business training to obtain necessary skills and experiences. Government and educational

institutions should make the scheme formal by incorporating it into school and educational curriculum.

2. On the part of the masters (Ogas), they should ensure that they teach the apprentice the required basic skills to excel in the business and also provide support and mentorship even after the apprenticeship period/training.

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