

THE INFLUENCE OF IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examines the influence of Igbo apprenticeship system on entrepreneurship development in Southeast, Nigeria. The study aims to achieve the following objectives: To assess the influence of apprenticeship incubation on business ethics and principles in Southeast, Nigeria. And to evaluate the influence of social networking on business expansions of SMEs in southeast, Nigeria. 272 founders of SMEs operating within the selected major markets across the five states in Southeast, Nigeria, were conveniently sampled for the study. The findings from the study reveal that apprenticeship incubation has a significant influence on business ethics and principles of entrepreneurs in selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria $\{ \leq 48.00; \leq 45.50, p < .05; \}$ and social networking has a significant impact on business expansion of selected SMEs in the selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria $\{ X^2 = 8.32, p < .05 \}$. The findings concludes that apprenticeship incubation and social networking play pivotal roles in the development of entrepreneurship in Southeast, Nigeria. Based on the results, the study recommends SMEs founders should sustain the indigenous system by integrating the scheme in their business operations. Also, that state governments in Southeast region should make laws that will formalize and legalize the Igbo apprenticeship system.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Igba-boi, Apprenticeship System, Entrepreneurial Incubation*

Introduction

The Nigerian economy is exemplified by weak industrial base, dependence on the oil sector, low foreign direct investment, high rate of importation of basic consumer goods, poor economic performance and high level of youth and graduate unemployment. But the admixture of growing youth population and graduate unemployment is a toxic cocktail that portends great danger for Nigeria; particularly in terms of reinforcing poverty and accentuating insecurity. As Ejo-Orusa (2019b) poignantly observed: ‘The young unemployed are already posing serious security challenges to Nigeria as armed robbers, kidnappers, Niger Delta militants, Fulani Herdsmen and deadly Boko Haram terrorists.’ The situation is made worse by the fact that the number of young people and Nigeria’s population generally is projected to increase significantly when the population in other parts of the world is decreasing (Bloom, 2010). In fact, Nigeria is projected to become the Third most populous country ahead of the United States of America and behind China and India by 2050 (Ejo-Orusa and Mpi, 2019). Worryingly, even before the full manifestation of the predicted population explosion, Nigeria has retrogressed from being a middle-income country to becoming the poverty capital of the world ahead of India (Ejo-Orusa and Mpi, 2019).. Following Joseph Schumpeter’s incontrovertible insights as early as 1911, entrepreneurship remains the best-known instrument that could be used to stimulate Nigeria’s economy and put the country on a new trajectory of economic growth and prosperity (Schumpeter, 1961; Braunerhjelm, 2010; Orugun & Nafiu, 2014; Ejo-Orusa, 2019a). In particular, given the extremely weak industrial sector that cannot create employment opportunities for the growing army of unemployed youths and young graduates, self-employment is an option of necessity for Nigeria (Sutter, Bruto & Chen, 2019; Birch, 1979) and expectedly, entrepreneurship has become an objective that is widely canvassed by Nigeria’s policy makers and economic managers.

Therefore, any good entrepreneurship development programme must be anchored on the entrepreneurial ecosystem that strengthens the society and by drawing from, and building on, the society’s peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, and of course good management practice as well as lessons

from successful enterprise promotion initiatives from across the world (EjoOrusa, 2019b). However, even in the midst of the neglect of entrepreneurship development by government(s) in Nigeria, the Igbo Apprenticeship System has consistently remained vibrant. Thus, the system stands out as the natural foundation for any attempt to kick-start the process of embedding the enterprise culture and for promoting entrepreneurship in Nigeria, especially in the Southeast region, and the system has equally raised successful entrepreneurs after the Nigerian civil war (Ejo-Orusa and Mpi, 2019).

The apprenticeship system is a training and skill development initiative practiced all over the world and it has long been used to prepare workers to gain occupational skills in many countries (Lerman, 2012). The system varies from country-to-country and sometimes from one region to the other even within the same country. However, the common feature is that the system focuses on developing a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training which is sometimes accompanied with study.

In terms of crafting, the Igbo people, who are the indigenous inhabitants of the southeastern part of Nigeria; are known for their proficiency in various crafts, including pottery, blacksmithing, weaving, and more. The apprenticeship system has played a vital role in passing down these crafting skills from one generation to the next. As apprentices learn from skilled craftsmen, they not only acquire technical skills but also gain an appreciation for the cultural and artistic aspects of these crafts. Crafting within the Igbo apprenticeship system has helped preserve and promote traditional skills, ensuring that these skills are passed down and sustained for future generations. Additionally, it contributes to the economic development of the region as skilled craftsmen often set up their own businesses, creating employment opportunities and contributing to the local economy (Obeta, 2011).

In some countries, the apprentice gets some certification or license to practice a particular trade or profession at the end of the training period. The system has immense potential including addressing skill mismatches, wage inequality and high youth unemployment. Every country tailor's its apprenticeship system based on its culture, economic history, the level of economic development, socio-economic institutions and legal environment. The Igbo Apprenticeship System is a system developed by the Igbos in Eastern Nigeria but is now practiced in all parts of the country. Although the system is rather informal and given little or no attention by government (Ejo-Orusa and Mpi, 2019), it has nevertheless made and is still making significant contributions in entrepreneurship development of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), wealth and job creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth and development of the country at large (Mpi, 2019), especially in the Southeast region.

However, the Igbo, one of Nigeria's three main ethnic groups located within the South East and parts of South South regions of Nigeria, are described by (Igwe, et. al., 2018) as naturally enterprising and ingenious. This description reinforces the observation by (Meagher, 2009) who had valorized Igbo informal enterprises and its integrative roles in nation building. Others like (Harniett – Sievers, 2006), have also talked glowingly about the exceptionalism of the Igbo, even in the midst of very difficult historical challenges, including the almost three years Nigeria – Biafra Civil War, and (Kilby, 1963) whose survey of small industries development in the eastern part of the country was inspiring. The romantic picture painted above, may not be contextually right, currently, as indicators are rife that apprenticeship scheme in Igboland has suffered some reverses, and generally now on the decline, and this needs to be further interrogated with a view to revitalizing the scheme. There is an ongoing doubt about the continued relevance and utility of the apprenticeship scheme in Igboland. Given this backdrop, exploring the effectiveness and sustainability of the Igbo apprenticeship system towards entrepreneurial development of Southeast, Nigeria forms the central theme of this study.

The Igbo apprenticeship system as earlier stated has contributed significantly in revolutionizing most indigenous business enterprises in Nigeria. Most successful indigenous business moguls that control mega business conglomerates in Southeast, owe their successes and achievements to Igbo

apprenticeship incubation, which refined their business knowledge, purified their trade principles and sharpened their marketing skills and strategies.

Unfortunately, the Igbo apprenticeship system is currently on a downward, due to disinterest by most teeming youths and disregards by successful beneficiaries to continue to culture. Most business men prefer the services of paid workers and employees to young apprentices. Also, the issues of non-settlement, family conflicts and disputes that erupt on daily basis have limited the practices and acceptance of the apprenticeship system by most indigenous entrepreneurs.

Therefore, owing to the theoretical nature of most studies on Igbo apprenticeship system, this study aimed to quantitatively analyze the challenges of Igbo apprenticeships system and how it affects entrepreneurial development in Southeast, Nigeria, in order to arrive at a more empirical and positivistic result.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of Igbo apprenticeship system on entrepreneurship development in Southeast, Nigeria. Other specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the influence of apprenticeship incubation on business ethics and principles of entrepreneurs in selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria.
2. To evaluate the influence of social networking on business expansion of selected SMEs in the selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria.

Research Questions

To achieve the stated objectives, the following research questions will be explored:

1. What influence does apprenticeship incubation have on business ethics and principles of entrepreneurs in selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria?
2. What influence does social networking have on business expansion of selected SMEs in the selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will guide this study:

1. Apprenticeship incubation has a significant influence on business ethics and principles of entrepreneurs in selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria..
2. Social networking has a significant impact on business expansion of selected SMEs in the selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

It will be delineated to SMEs that operate in major markets situated across the five states in Southeast, Nigeria. The research covered a specific timeframe between January to October, 2023. It adopted descriptive surveys as primary source of data collection from respondents. Also, literatures reviewed were restricted to only concepts, theories and factors that deal with Igbo apprenticeship system and entrepreneurial development.

2.1 Conceptual Review

Igbo Apprenticeship System

The Igbo Apprenticeship System is a unique and integral socio-economic and cultural institution that has been practiced for generations among the Igbo people of Nigeria. It is a system deeply rooted in Igbo culture and plays a pivotal role in shaping the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the Igbo community (Nzewi, 2002). The Igbo people have a rich history of trade, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship. These economic activities have been central to Igbo society for centuries, and the apprenticeship system has evolved to ensure the continuity of these traditions. It is important to note that Igbo society is known for its decentralized and democratic structure, providing a fertile ground for entrepreneurial endeavors (Isichei, 1997).

Furthermore, the Igbo apprenticeship system is characterized by several key elements. At its core, it involves a formal or informal arrangement in which a young individual, known as an apprentice, is placed under the guidance and mentorship of a master craftsman, artisan, or trader (Smith, 2007). This mentorship can extend to various trades and crafts, including blacksmithing, pottery, trading, and other vocations. During this apprenticeship period, which can span several years, the apprentice is exposed to hands-on training, practical knowledge, and the intricacies of their chosen field. More so, the system is defined by its emphasis on the transfer of specialized skills and expertise from the master to the apprentice (Nzewi, 2002). This skill transfer is a vital aspect of the system, ensuring the preservation of traditional trades and crafts within Igbo society. It allows for the transmission of specific knowledge, techniques, and trade secrets, thus safeguarding the cultural and economic heritage of the Igbo people.

Components of Igbo Apprenticeship System

Apprenticeship Incubation: the apprenticeship incubation process often begins with a formal or informal agreement between the apprentice and the master, outlining the terms and duration of the apprenticeship (Isichei, 1997). During this period, apprentices work closely with their masters, gaining practical knowledge and expertise in their chosen field. They learn not only the technical aspects of the trade but also the intricacies of running a successful business, financial management, and trade ethics (Smith, 2007). It also involves an economic dimension, as apprentices are encouraged to save their earnings during the training period. These savings serve as seed capital to establish their businesses after completing the apprenticeship, thus fostering economic self-reliance and independence (Nzewi, 2002). Furthermore, apprenticeship incubation goes beyond economic aspects. It has strong social and community-building components. Apprentices often become integrated into the master's extended family and the wider community, establishing social bonds and networks (Smith, 2007). This social integration strengthens the sense of community and solidarity among the Igbo people.

Social Networking: Apprenticeships often involve a complex web of relationships among the apprentice, the master, and the community. The system promotes economic growth and self-reliance by allowing apprentices to save money earned during their apprenticeship to start their businesses after completing the training. Additionally, apprentices often become integrated into the master's extended family and the wider community, which can lead to social support and cooperation. These networks extend beyond economic aspects and contribute to social cohesion and solidarity within the Igbo society.

Entrepreneurial Development

Entrepreneurship development is a multifaceted process that encompasses a wide range of activities and initiatives aimed at nurturing and supporting individuals in their journey to become successful entrepreneurs and fostering the growth and sustainability of businesses. This concept is of paramount importance in the field of business and economic development, and it involves various dimensions that contribute to the creation of a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem (Kuratko, 2005). It can be defined as the systematic and strategic process of equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, resources, and mindset necessary to identify opportunities, take calculated risks, and establish and manage successful businesses (Kuratko, 2005). It is characterized by several key elements, including education and training, access to resources, mentorship, networking, and support systems.

Components of Entrepreneurial Development

Business ethics: refers to the study and application of ethical principles and moral values in the context of business decision-making and behavior. It involves considering the moral implications of business actions and ensuring that ethical standards and principles guide the conduct of individuals and organizations within the business world (Ferrell, Fraedrich, & Ferrell, 2019).

Business Expansion: refers to the strategic process by which a company increases its operations, reach, or capabilities, often with the goal of achieving growth and capturing new market opportunities. This may involve broadening product lines, entering new markets, opening additional

locations, or diversifying operations to enhance business performance and competitiveness (Root, 1994).

2.2 Theoretical Review

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Social learning theory is increasingly cited as an essential component of sustainable natural resource management and the promotion of desirable behavioural change. (Muro & Jeffrey 2008). This theory is based on the idea that we learn from our interactions with others in a social context. Separately, by observing the behaviors of others, people develop similar behaviors. After observing the behavior of others, people assimilate and imitate that behavior, especially if their observational experiences are positive ones or include rewards related to the observed behavior. According to Bandura, imitation involves the actual reproduction of observed motor activities. (Bandura 1977). Thus, the business skills entrepreneurs exhibit are presumably taught by the masters, who instill in them business ethics and principles.

Conceptual Framework

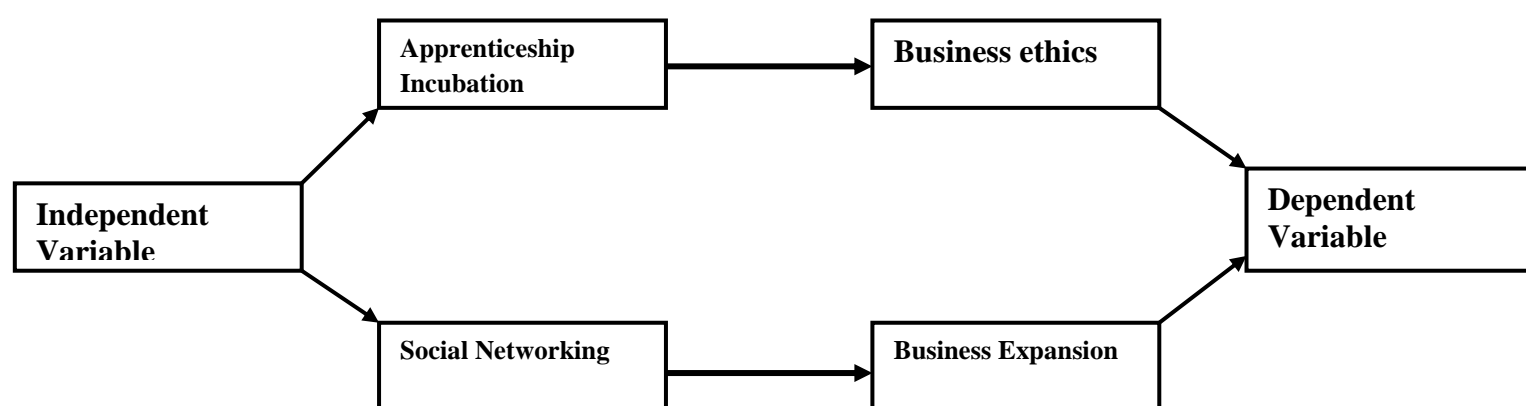


Fig.1 Diagram of Relationship Among Variables

The above diagram shows the relationship between the dimensions of the Independent variable, Igbo apprentice system and dependent variable, entrepreneurship development. Thus, it presumed that entrepreneurs who were successfully incubated in the Igbo apprenticeship system, possess and express strong business ethics and principles in carrying out their business activities. Also, it is equally believed that using their masters' social network, they can expand their customer base, thus expanding their business enterprises. Therefore, it is hypothesized that there will be a positive relationship between the two variables.

Empirical Review

Igbo Apprenticeship System and Entrepreneurship Development

Anago (2023) study examined the factors militating Nigeria's Igbo apprenticeship model decline through the qualitative methodology. Results show that the apprenticeship duration, lack of education integration and provision of seed capital upon graduation from the apprenticeship training are the top three challenges triggering failure. Recommendation stressed that the Igbo apprenticeship model solely practised by the informal private sectors of Igbo origin could drop the unemployment rate in Nigeria if the government reformed the process by introducing grants or seed capital and education for the apprentice. There is optimism that both would achieve more together than the current practice where the practitioners are left practising the old-fashioned model.

Ifechukwu-Jacobs (2022) study examined the effect of igbo trade apprenticeship system on unemployment reduction in Onitsha The specifics objectives were as follows: Ascertain the impact of apprentice skill acquisition on unemployment reduction in Onitsha: Ascertain the impact of apprenticeship training system, on unemployment reduction at Onitsha. The research is anchored under the Skill Acquisition Theory were adopted in this study. Primary sources of data were used and

the instrument employed in collecting information from the population was through structured questionnaire. The method of analysis used was percentage table and correlation analysis for testing of the research hypotheses. The population of the study was 3085 boss, who has been in the business for more than 10 years and a sample size of 592 was determined using Gorg & Ball formula. The research adopted sampling techniques were purposive sampling. From the analyses tested, the study found that: Apprentice skill acquisition has significant effect on unemployment reduction at Onitsha: Apprenticeship training system has significant effect on unemployment reduction at Onitsha: The study recommended that: Small business sustainability, apprentices should undergo appropriate traditional business training to obtain necessary skills and experiences. On the part of the masters (Ogas), they should ensure timely settlement of their diligent apprentices. Stakeholders should equally support successfully graduated apprentices to gain a foothold in their new business.

Okwuowulu (2022) study was to investigate the impact of Igbo apprenticeship system in the development of small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design. Data were primary in nature and collected through the use of Likert scale structured questionnaire to generate responses from the selected sample. Copies of the returned questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the pattern of data. The hypothesis was tested using the Chi-Square Test statistics and the hypothesis was tested at 5% level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that Igbo apprenticeship system has positive and significant Impact on the development of small and medium scale enterprise. More so, Igbo apprenticeship system enhances the establishment and development of small and medium scale enterprises; promotes business growth and survival rate; creates access to trade and informal credit; and creates opportunity for excellent business management skills and competence. The study therefore recommended that the government of Nigeria and Africa by extension should adopt the practice of the Igbo man apprenticeship system, as a strategy for the development of Nigeria and African entrepreneurship.

Farayibi (2021) study investigated the impact of Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) on informal sector businesses in Nigeria. IAS is an innovative indigenous informal sector financing approach among the Igbo people in Nigeria. The study conceptualized the capital sharing model of IAS in comparison with venture capital and modern incubation system. Using a household survey data collected from about 400 informal sector businesses randomly selected from Onitsha (Anambra state) and Aba (Abia states) in South-Eastern Nigeria, the study examined the effect of capital sharing model on small firm growth in Nigeria. The estimation technique was based on ordinary least square (OLS) method while the Probit regression was used as a robust check on the OLS estimates. Findings revealed that the businesses of apprentice-graduates, i.e. those who underwent IAS grew significantly in any of the three measures of growth used; unlike the businesses whose owners did not undergo IAS. Therefore, this study provided an empirical validation to the use of the capital sharing model of the Igbo Apprenticeship System as an innovative informal sector financing model in Nigeria. The study thus recommends a policy framework that supports this innovative informal sector financing in Nigeria. Also, the venture capital and modern incubation system can be extended to incorporate features of the capital sharing model of IAS. This would however require strengthening the informal sector business environment.

Anigbogu, Onwuteaka and Okoli (2019) study examined the Igbo man perspectives of apprenticeship and entrepreneurial development in southeast Nigeria: Implications to economic growth using the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and the regression model of the Ordinary Least Square (OLS). A total sample of four hundred and eighty two (482) SMEs owners of Igbo extraction were the respondents of this study. From the result of the PCA, the principal components that serves as motivations for apprenticeship by Igbo entrepreneurs is the cash infusion giving to apprentice as start-up capital. Secondly, the principal components form the Igbo man perspectives of factors influencing entrepreneurial development is tolerance for risk and thirdly, the principal components from the challenges in the Igbo man apprenticeship system is that apprentices sometimes steals from their masters and adds to their start-up capital. Regression results revealed that all the three coefficients (The motivations for apprenticeship by Igbo entrepreneurs; Igbo man perspective of factors

influencing entrepreneurial development; and challenges in the Igbo man apprenticeship system) have significant effect on entrepreneurial development in southeast Nigeria. The study recommends that the government of Nigeria and African by extension should adopt the practice of the Igbo man apprenticeship system and entrepreneurial development in southeast Nigeria as a strategy for the development African entrepreneurship. This is because of its sustainability in SMEs development and poverty reduction among the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria among others.

2.6 Gap in Empirical Review

The studies of Anago (2023) Ifechukwu-Jacobs (2022) Okwuowulu (2022) Farayibi (2021); and Anigbogu, Onwuteaka and Okoli (2019) reviewed above established an empirical relationship between Igbo apprenticeship system. But emphasis was not laid on the dimensions of Igbo apprenticeship system, such as; apprenticeship incubations and social network; and dimensions of entrepreneurship development, which include; business ethics, principles and expansion. This empirical gap will be filled in the course of the study.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing structured questionnaires to collect primary data from selected markets across Southeast Nigeria, specifically Ariaria, Onitsha, Ogbete, Abakaliki, and Orlu. A descriptive survey design was adopted to capture participants' opinions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding the Igbo apprenticeship system and entrepreneurship development. The sample size of 352 was derived from a population of 3,000 SMEs using Taro Yamane's formula, with proportional allocation across the markets via Bowley's stratified sampling method. Convenience sampling was employed to select respondents, and the questionnaire's validity was ensured through expert review, while its reliability was confirmed through a pilot test yielding a Cronbach Alpha of 0.83. Data analysis was conducted using non-parametric tools, including One-way ANOVA and Chi-Square, with decisions based on a 5% significance level.

Results

Hypothesis 1

Apprenticeship incubation has a significant influence on business ethics and principles of entrepreneurs in selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria.

Table 4.2: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Significance

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The categories defined by Igbo Apprenticeship Incubation ≤ 48.000 and >48.000 occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.009	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The categories defined by Business Ethics and Principles ≤ 45.500 and >45.500 occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Igbo Apprenticeship Incubation is normal with mean 44.801 and standard deviation 18.21.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.000 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of Business Ethics and Principles is normal with mean 42.107 and standard deviation 16.60.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.000 ¹	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹ Lilliefors Corrected

The mean and standard deviation of Igbo apprenticeship incubation ($M = 44.80$, $SD = 18.21$) and business ethics and principles ($M = 42.11$, $SD = 16.60$) results show that the distribution is normal. Also, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of significance shows that both categories that defined both the

Igbo apprenticeship incubation (≤ 48.00 , $p < .05$) and business ethics and principles (≤ 45.50 , $p < .05$) occurred less 5% margin error.

Decision Rule

Since the kromogonov-Smirnov test of significance is less than 5 percent, we accept the alternative hypothesis which states that apprenticeship incubation has a significant influence on business ethics and principles of entrepreneurs in selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria

Hypothesis 2

Social networking has a significant impact on business expansion of selected SMEs in the selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria.

Table 4.3: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	8.32 ^a	16	.009
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	6.74	16	.003
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	2.36	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	272		

Note: $p < .05$

The Chi-Square test for examining the association between social networking and its impact on the business expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in selected markets in Southeast Nigeria. The Pearson Chi-Square result ($X^2 = 8.32$, $p < .05$), shows that the probability of the test result falls within a margin error less than 5 percent, thus confirming the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, the second hypothesis which states that social networking has a significant impact on business expansion of selected SMEs in the selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria, is accepted.

4.3 Discussions

The first hypothesis which states that apprenticeship incubation has a significant influence on business ethics and principles of entrepreneurs in selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria, is confirmed (≤ 48.00 ; ≤ 45.50 , $p < .05$), this finding affirms the statement made by some respondents during an informal interview session. They confirmed that they learnt their business strategies, ethics and principles from their masters, while undergoing the apprenticeship scheme. They further attested that the ethics have guided them in their business operations

The second hypothesis which states that social networking has a significant impact on business expansion of selected SMEs in the selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria, is equally confirmed ($X^2 = 8.32$, $p < .05$). This result confirms the testimonies made by some respondents during the informal interview sessions. They stated that they were able to expand their business enterprises and equally grow their customer base through the social relationships and network they formed while undergoing the apprenticeship scheme.

Summary of Results

The findings of this study revealed the following

1. Apprenticeship incubation has a significant influence on business ethics and principles of entrepreneurs in selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria (≤ 48.00 ; ≤ 45.50 , $p < .05$)
2. Social networking has a significant impact on business expansion of selected SMEs in the selected markets in Southeast, Nigeria ($X^2 = 8.32$, $p < .05$).

Conclusion

The outcome of the study shows that apprenticeship incubation and social networking are relevant in the development and advancement of entrepreneurship in Southeast, Nigeria. This implies that whatever knowledge and skills about a particular trade possessed by most entrepreneurs that operate within the selected markets for the study, were learnt from their masters and the customers that will patronize are based on their masters' social networking and relationships.

These findings uphold Igbo collectivistic approach to capitalism, which creates a sense of brotherhood, communal connections and decentralized wealth accumulation and distributions, which has created multi-millionaires through the Igbo apprenticeship system. Therefore, as an economic heritage, it our duty to preserve, refine and revolutionize the apprenticeship system to meet global standard practices.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations should be taken into cognizance by stakeholders;

1. The established entrepreneurs in Southeast should continue the sustainability and survivability of the apprenticeship system, by adopting the scheme in their respective enterprises.
2. The state government through its legislative arm should formalize and legalize the system by making laws and formulating policies that will checkmate the operations of the apprenticeship system and possibly address the issues of dispute resolutions and non-settlement in the Igbo apprenticeship system

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has proven that there exist empirical significant impacts of Igbo apprenticeship system on entrepreneurship development. Thus, it has added to the existing body of knowledge and literatures on Igbo apprenticeship system and entrepreneurship development.

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