EVALUATION OF IGBO APPRENTICESHIP MODEL AND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP MODEL

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Abstract: The evaluation of Igbo Apprenticeship Model and the Registered Apprenticeship Mode is the subject of the study. The ancient traditional method upon which the Igbo Apprenticeship Model is based is having a negative impact on its capacity to recruit young people into the system; in order to remedy this issue, the system needs to be updated. The objective is to analysis the relationship between component and mode of execution of Igbo Apprenticeship Model and Registered Apprenticeship Mode. The research questions and hypotheses were developed in accordance with the objectives. The study's population is 3501 masters in three markets each in Abia and Imo State. The sample size was chosen using the Taro Yamane formula, and the samples from the population were chosen using the criterion purposive sampling method and simple random sampling. The study used a survey research design. The type of relationship between variables was determined using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). According to the findings, there is a strong correlation between the Igbo Apprenticeship Model and the Registered Apprenticeship Model in terms of how the components are implemented. The study advises adopting a hybrid approach in upgrading the Igbo Apprenticeship Model.

Keywords: Igbo Apprenticeship Model, Registered Apprenticeship Mode, hybrid approach, Component, execution.

1. INTRODUCTION

The transmission of occupational skills and knowledge is fundamental to economic sustainability and individual upward mobility. Across diverse societies, structured training mechanisms have evolved to meet this critical need. Among the most salient models are the indigenous Igbo apprenticeship system, prevalent in Southeastern Nigeria, and the formal, government regulated Registered Apprenticeship Model common in many industrialized nations. While both aim to foster skilled labour, their mechanisms, legal frameworks, social embeddedness, and outcomes present significant contrasts that warrant careful academic evaluation. Understanding these differences is crucial for policymakers seeking to leverage the strengths of indigenous systems while modernizing vocational training infrastructure.

The Igbo apprenticeship model, often referred to as Imu Aka or Igba Odumodu, is a time-honoured, informal contractual arrangement rooted deeply in communitarian values (Kanu, 2019). It operates primarily within the sphere of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), especially in trading, crafts, and services. The core structure involves an agreement between a master (the entrepreneur) and an apprentice, often involving an initial capital contribution or guarantee. The duration is fixed, usually spanning three to seven years, during which the apprentice provides unpaid or minimally compensated labour in exchange for intensive, hands-on training directly integrated into the daily operations of the business. A significant feature is the post-completion settlement, where the master typically grants the apprentice a lump sum of capital, often called Iba Anya or settlement capital, to establish their own independent venture. This model excels in contextual relevance, practical skill acquisition, and immediate entrepreneurial incubation. Because training is directly tied to business survival, the skills imparted are highly market-specific and immediately applicable. Furthermore, the strong social and familial ties underpinning the agreement enforce discipline and commitment far more effectively than purely contractual obligations might in a weaker institutional environment.

In contrast, the Registered Apprenticeship Model (RAM) is characterized by its formality, standardization, and regulatory oversight. Typically administered or overseen by government agencies or recognized industry bodies, RAMs define precise occupational standards, structured curricula, required related technical instruction (RTI), and mandated wage progression schedules. The model ensures portability of skills through standardized certification recognized across regions or even nationally. In jurisdictions like the United States or Germany, apprentices are legally recognized employees, receiving progressive wages commensurate with their increasing competency, often combining on-the-job training (OJT) with classroom instruction at technical colleges or vocational schools. The primary strength of the RAM lies in its transparency, quality assurance, and the formal documentation of acquired competencies, which aids labour mobility and access to formal sector employment. It mitigates the inherent risks associated with informal training, such as exploitation or inadequate skill transfer, through legal recourse and established oversight bodies.

The primary divergence lies in their institutional foundations and accountability mechanisms. The Igbo model relies heavily on social capital, reputation, and the expectation of reciprocity within a tight-knit community structure. Failure to adhere to the terms by either party carries severe social sanctions. However, this reliance on social capital also limits its scalability and adaptability to modern, large-scale corporate environments where anonymity and formal contracts prevail. Moreover, the quality of training can be highly variable, dependent entirely on the individual master's expertise and willingness to teach rather than mandated curriculum adherence. Recent studies indicate that while the settlement capital enables entrepreneurship, the initial skills gap when entering the formal economy can sometimes hinder the long-term sustainability of these new micro-enterprises if the market shifts rapidly.

Conversely, the RAM, while robust in quality control and certification, often struggles with accessibility and relevance. The reliance on formal educational institutions for RTI can create bottlenecks, and the administrative burden associated with registration and compliance can deter small businessesthe very backbone of many developing economiesfrom participating as employers. Furthermore, the standardized nature of RAM curricula can sometimes lag behind rapid technological advancements, resulting in graduates possessing broad but potentially outdated knowledge in niche, fast-evolving trades. The slow pace of wage progression in some RAMs can also make participation less attractive to young individuals seeking immediate income compared to informal alternatives.

Bridging the gap between these two models offers significant policy potential. The Igbo system's unparalleled success in fostering micro-entrepreneurship and rapidly deploying practical skills directly into the market deserves recognition. It embodies a powerful mechanism for poverty alleviation and economic dynamism at the grassroots level. However, the informal nature leaves apprentices vulnerable to exploitation and limits the transferability of their qualifications beyond specific trade networks. The RAM, conversely, offers the legal protection and standardized documentation necessary for scaling businesses into larger national and international markets.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In recent times, increased emphasis has been laid on the need for the Nigeria youth to focus on wealth creation through entrepreneurship other than pay employment as a strategy to cure the ever-growing unemployment, insecurity, get-rich-quick syndrome (yahoo-yahoo) and so on. It is understood that, one vital discourse today in the country is about re-awaking youth interest in apprenticeship system.

Apprenticeship system (Igbo Apprenticeship Model) is very popular in the south east and has contributed greatly to the region wealth creation capacity in Nigeria. This system is now being copied by other Africa countries as a system for human development (wealth creation). However, this system which has been a saving grace appears to be dying off gradually with many youths reluctant to go into it again. Therefore, the need to modernize it becomes very vital.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The general objective is to evaluate the relationship between Igbo apprenticeship model and registered apprenticeship model.

The specific objectives are:

i. To examine the component of Igbo Apprenticeship Model and Registered Apprenticeship Model.

ii. To examine the various model of execution of Igbo Apprenticeship Model and Registered Apprenticeship Model.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated:

i. What is the relationship between the component of Igbo Apprenticeship Model and Registered Apprenticeship Model?

ii. What is the various model of execution of Igbo Apprenticeship Model and Registered Apprenticeship Model?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

Because it analyses just a portion of the target group in a manner that only the portion chosen for analysis could be considered a true reflection of the entire population, a survey research approach was utilized.

2.2 Sources of Data

Data collection methods fall into two categories: primary and secondary. Data from books, journals, and internet publications were collected using secondary data collection techniques, often referred to as "data mining." Primary data was collected using a questionnaire and an interview.

2.3 Population of The Study

The population of this study comprises the masters (who have apprentices) in ten (10) markets that are under study. The reason for concentrating on the masters (that have apprentices) is because the variables under study require somebody with key knowledge of the system (graduates and practitioners). The researcher selected five (5) markets from each state (Abia and Imo) under study.

Table 1: List of Selected Markets and Population of the Study

S/N	MARKETS	*MASTERS
1	Ariaria International Market – Aba	1256
2	New Market – Aba	956
3	Cemetery Market – Aba	740
4	Alaba Inter. Market – Owerri	587
5	Timber Market Naze – Owerri	549
6	Malaysia Market – Obowo	413
Total		**4,501**

Source: Market Union Registers

*Masters that are registered with the market union and also have their apprentices registered.

The total population of the study is 4,501 Masters.

2.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was determined based on the application of Taro Yamane formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample Size

N = Population (4501)

E = Margin of Error 5% or 0.05

1 = constant

$$n = \frac{4501}{1 + 4501(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4501}{11.2525}$$

n = 400

Using the sample proportionate formula/method, the sample size distribution of the respondents across each market in the states is given below:

$$nhi = \frac{(Nhi)(Ni)}{N}$$

Where: nhi = sample size for each market

Nho = General sample size (400 ÷ 2) = 200 for each state

Ni = Population Size of each market

N = Total population of market in each state (Abia – 2952, and Imo – 1549).

Table 2 Sample Size of the Study According to Market

S/N	MARKETS	*MASTERS
1	Ariaria International Market – Aba	85
2	New Market – Aba	65
3	Cemetery Market – Aba	50
4	Alaba Inter. Market – Owerri	76
5	Timber Market Naze – Owerri	71
6	Malaysia Market – Obowo	53
Total		**400**

Source: Researcher Computation

The researcher employed a criterion purposive sampling method and simple random sampling to choose the samples from the population. Balloting was used to conduct simple random sampling. Because only masters who complete the Igbo Apprenticeship System are eligible, the participants were chosen using purposive criteria. Thus, if a sample fails to meet the requirements, it is replaced.

2.5 Instruments for Data Collection

The survey was used in conducting this research. For data gathering, the researcher employed a structured questionnaire with 12 questions that were based on the study goals (independent and dependent variables). The study/research objectives were used to further divide Part B into five sections: A, and B. Using a four-point Likert scale of strongly agree (4 points), agree (3 points), disagree (2 points), and strongly disagree (1 point), the researcher created the research instrument. The questionnaire was coded using the four-point Likert scale, and each possible response from the respondents was given a nominal value. The items were evaluated and scored using this code.

2.6 Reliability and Validity of Measuring Instrument

Reliability of Measuring Instrument

Reliability analysis is used to define whether the items appropriately construct and interpret one idea in a unique way possible. Cronbach's alpha is used to verify the variable's internal consistency and reliability.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach Alpha	No. of Items	Composite Reliability
Component	0.873	6	0.851
Model of Execution	0.873	6	0.796

Source: SPSS (27)

Validity of Measuring Instrument

The capacity of a measuring instrument to measure what it is designed to measure is referred to as its validity, according to Asika (2004). The findings of the Validity analysis that we performed in SPSS indicate that no value has been lower than.7, hence the variables are converted.

2.7 Method of Data Analysis

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to determine the nature of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, while descriptive statistical methods were used to analyse the data gathered from the surveys and interviews and for test hypotheses.

Using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software package, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical technique was used.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the results of the analyses, the summary is presented as follows:

1. The component of Igbo Apprenticeship Model and Registered Apprenticeship Model is significantly related ($r = 0.671$ and P-value = 0.000). This relationship could be said to be significant and direct because, as both models can be easily complementing each other.

2. At $r = 0.618$, a significant positive relationship exists between model of execution Igbo Apprenticeship Model and Registered Apprenticeship Model. The result established that the model of execution Igbo Apprenticeship Model and Registered Apprenticeship Model are related.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, both the Igbo apprenticeship model and the Registered Apprenticeship Model represent successful, albeit vastly different, strategies for human capital development. The Igbo model thrives on social capital, providing rapid, context-specific entrepreneurial incubation. The RAM excels in quality standardization, legal protection, and portable certification. An informed evaluation reveals that the future of robust vocational training in dynamic economies lies not in the wholesale adoption of one over the other, but in a nuanced, hybrid approach that injects the necessary elements of formal governance, quality assurance, and legal protection into the proven entrepreneurial engine of the indigenous system. This synthesis promises a skilled workforce capable of both immediate local impact and long-term global competitiveness.

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