

Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme and Entrepreneurial Orientation in Anambra State, Nigeria

Callistus Tabansi Okeke^{1,*}, Clement I. Ezeanyaeji², Chibuike R. Oguanobi², Ogochukwu T. Ugwunna²

¹Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria

²Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Nigeria

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Abstract Quasi-success guarantee of Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme has placed it at the crest of entrepreneurial incubator known to mankind. The study examined the relationship between the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and entrepreneurial orientation in Anambra state, Nigeria. The study was anchored on the social exchange theory (SET) to bring out the potency and the impact of exchange of activities between masters/*Ndi-Oga* and their apprentices/*Umu-Boi* through the mechanism of entrepreneurial orientation. Survey research design was adopted for this study. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit responses from members of micro, small and medium scale enterprises (MSMEs) that passed through the scheme and currently have their own apprentices. The hypotheses of the models were tested using E-View Software Ver.10. The findings from the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions (Source of Seed-Capital at the End of Apprentices Indentureship, Exposure of Business Owners to the Apprenticeship Scheme and Business Turn Over) of the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and the five dimensions (Autonomy, Competitive Aggressiveness, Innovativeness, Proactiveness and Risk Taking Ability) of entrepreneurial orientation in Anambra state, Nigeria and therefore concluded that the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme is distinctive and dynamic since, at completion of the apprenticeship, the apprentices who pass through the scheme receive seed capitals/equipment to start their own businesses/workshops. The study proffers the following recommendations amongst others that: the Igbo

apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme should be used to cultivate an innovative mindset, this equips them with the skills needed to thrive in competitive business environments; the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme will be pivotal in nurturing a culture of innovation, proactiveness and resilience needed to embrace risk-taking as an essential aspect of entrepreneurship among apprentices.

Keywords Entrepreneurial Orientation, Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*), MSMEs

1. Introduction

Global attention on the relevance of on-the-job training leading to acquisition of practical skills and knowledge over a period of years as found in many trades/professions has taken center stage because of its perceived importance as an explicit strategy for fostering creativity and achievement of potential of entrepreneurs.

Apprenticeship practices in Nigeria emanated during the pre-colonial era, when skills were passed on within the family by training young people in family trades, crafts and skills. During this era, clans and households fervently protected their expertise through traditions, family heritage, and ceremonial practices.

Apprenticeship involves the exchange of labour and sometimes money for training on the job. The system has

immense potentials including addressing skill mismatches, wage inequality and high youth unemployment as it remains the vehicle for skills training [1]. Okeke and Osang [2], allude that Apprenticeship training is the fulcrum and lever for gathering all the necessary skills, knowledge and techniques of a particular job that will help one to be established and get involved in the creation of wealth. The system varies from country to country and sometimes from one region to another even within the same country. However, the common denominator 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 [3].

The Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme is a system developed by the Igbos in Eastern Nigeria. It involves the process of learning and skill development through enlistment of young lads as apprentices with a master-craftsman or an experienced business person for a stipulated period of training, after which the apprentice is settled with seed capital/equipment to start his own business or workshop. Although the scheme is traditional and informal in nature, with little or no attention by government, it is a crucial initial phase in the entrepreneurship process and makes significant contributions to the growth, development and promotion of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which is the medium of transmission mechanism of the impact of the scheme through the channel of entrepreneurial orientation dimensions.

Entrepreneurial orientation refers to the way in which an organization or individual approaches innovation, risk-taking, and proactivity in the pursuit of business opportunities [4]. It is a multidimensional construct that depicts the firm's strategic orientation. According to Zhang et al. [5], entrepreneurial orientation is an approach to strategic implementation that utilizes a range of resources owned by the organizations. A high level of entrepreneurial orientation is typically seen as a key factor in driving innovation, growth, and long-term success in both startups and established companies. Some of the key characteristics of an entrepreneurial orientation include autonomy, a willingness to take risks, a focus on innovation, a proactive approach to identifying and pursuing new opportunities, a willingness to experiment and learn from failure, and a strong customer orientation.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which are defined by their employee count, vary from country to country. According to Patwardhan [6], MSMEs typically have 10 to 100 employees. In Nigeria, however, MSMEs are classified differently: Micro Enterprises have 1 to 9 employees, Small Enterprises have 10 to 49 employees, and Medium Enterprises have 50 to 249 employees [7]. Research indicates that a strong entrepreneurial orientation, which includes a proactive, innovative, and risk-taking approach, enhances the internal capabilities and overall performance of MSMEs [8]. Furthermore, MSMEs that display a high degree of entrepreneurial orientation tend to

have a robust entrepreneurial mindset and a higher propensity for innovation, which positively influences their success [8]. The area of study encompasses Onitsha main market, Eke Awka market, and Nnewi automotive spare parts market all in Anambra state Nigeria, where variety of MSMEs exist, including traders, wholesalers, retailers, and manufacturers specializing in a wide range of products such as electronics, clothing, automotive spare parts and agricultural produce amongst others.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme is a long-standing tradition that cultivates entrepreneurial skills and promotes economic development within Igbo communities. This system, which encompasses both traditional and informal apprenticeships, is crucial for imparting essential survival skills [9]. The changing business environment and increasing globalization offer new opportunities and challenges for members of MSMEs that passed through the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme.

The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and business performance has significant practical implications, as a business's success heavily relies on its entrepreneurial orientation. Ismail et al. [10], posit that entrepreneurship is vital for a country's economic development. Innovative approaches to apprenticeship schemes, such as the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme, which is rooted in Igbo entrepreneurial culture, have become standard in promoting entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Understanding the core elements that drive entrepreneurship is crucial, as entrepreneurship boosts the efficiency of an economy's productive enterprises, generating value that fuels the national economy [11]. Despite its importance, there seems to be a dearth of empirical research on the impact of the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme on the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation. The Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme stands as a distinctive cultural phenomenon often overlooked in mainstream entrepreneurship literature. This research endeavors to bridge multiple gaps within academic inquiry concerning Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) schemes and entrepreneurial orientation.

1.2. Research Questions

To resolve the problem as stated in section 1.2, this study answered the following research questions:

1. How does the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme influence the autonomy of MSMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme relate to the competitive aggressiveness of MSMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and the

innovativeness of MSMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria?

4. How does the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme relate to the proactiveness of MSMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria?
5. To what degree does Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme relate to the risk-taking behavior of MSMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to examine the relationship between the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and entrepreneurial orientation in Anambra state, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives which this study pursued are;

1. To assess the extent of relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and autonomy of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the effect of Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme on competitive aggressiveness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.
3. To examine the relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and innovativeness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.
4. To evaluate the extent Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme relates to proactiveness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.
5. To determine the relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and risk taking of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

1.4. Research Hypotheses

To test the specific objectives of this study, the following null hypotheses have been specified.

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and autonomy of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and competitive aggressiveness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3:

There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and innovativeness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 4:

There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and proactiveness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 5:

There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and risk taking of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Apprenticeship: An Overview

The word apprenticeship was coined from the old French word 'aprentiz' meaning "someone learning" and the suffix (ship), meaning "state, condition of being." An apprenticeship is when someone is in a state or condition of learning from a master or an expert in a field. This involves the transfer of skills and knowledge while working alongside or under the guidance of an employer for an agreed-upon period, leading to the development of measurable competencies. Historically, apprenticeship arose from the willingness of master craftsmen to employ young individuals as a form of affordable labor in exchange for providing necessities like food, shelter, and formal training in the craft. Although predominantly male, female apprentices were also present in various trades such as seamstresses, tailors, cobblers, bakers, and stationers [12].

Typically, apprentices would commence their training between the ages of ten and fifteen, living within the master craftsman's household. Their agreement, often outlined in an indenture, would detail the terms between the craftsman, the apprentice, and sometimes the apprentice's parents or guardians [13]. The OECD [14] recognizes apprenticeship as an effective pathway for young individuals to transition from formal education to the workforce. Olulu et al. [15] view apprenticeship as a means for individuals to acquire skills and knowledge for their future livelihood and well-being. Nnonyelu et al. [16] define an apprentice as typically a teenager or young person who voluntarily or under persuasion seeks to acquire practical, and sometimes theoretical, knowledge in a specialized field or occupation they intend to pursue in the future for livelihood.

2.1.1. The Three Stages of the Apprenticeship Phase

The objective of an apprenticeship is the complete transformation of the apprentice's mindset and character, essential for mastering the trade or craft he aims to learn. According to Greene [17], achieving this goal involves three fundamental stages during the apprenticeship phase: Deep Observation (The Passive Mode), Skills Acquisition (The Practice Mode), and Experimentation (The Active Mode).

2.1.2. Types of Apprenticeship

According to Davy [18], apprenticeships fall into two main categories: Independent and Cooperative/Formal

Apprenticeships, as outlined in figure 1.

- (i) **Independent Apprenticeships:** The apprentices under independent apprenticeships are overseen by Craft masters/Ndi-Oga without involvement from educational institutions, as shown in figure 1. There's no formal curriculum or predefined training content. They operate separately from educational programs, meaning apprentices may not be concurrently enrolled in any formal education, and even if they are, there's no correlation between their studies and the apprenticeship. Within this category, there are traditional and informal apprenticeships.
- (ii) **Cooperative/Formal Apprenticeships:** This type of apprenticeship, depicted in figure 1, represents a modern, structured learning approach. It's a collaborative effort between educational institutions and employers and is typically regulated by law. Apprentices often spend a significant portion of their time within a designated company while also participating in formal schooling. Governance structures for this type of apprenticeship vary, with some being more institution-led (Curriculum integrated), others more employer-led (Work-based), and some balancing both (50%/50%). However, all involve a curriculum and are designed to allow students to apply theory to practice and acquire professional competence.

2.1.3. The Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme

The term "Boi/Boyi" originates from the Igbonized English word "boy," signifying a young lad. From the researcher's perspective, the Igbo apprenticeship scheme (*Igba Boi*) encompasses elements of both traditional and informal independent apprenticeship models, aligning with the concepts depicted in figure 1 and consistent with the definition of apprenticeship by Gonnon [19] as a method of learning focusing on acquiring specialized skills to prepare young adults for employment and societal integration.

Neuwirth [20], defines the Igbo apprenticeship scheme (*Igba Boi*) as a business philosophy centered on shared prosperity and the world's largest business incubator platform. Participants engage cooperatively to achieve economic equilibrium, where market leverageable factors are continuously balanced through the relinquishment and redistribution of market share. This process fosters social resilience and the formation of sustainable clusters, facilitated by major participants investing in their competitors. Success in this model is measured by quantifiable support to stakeholders rather than by absolute market dominance.

Hierarchical relationships among apprentices are strictly observed, particularly when multiple apprentices are present, delineating roles and responsibilities in the shop and household chores. And the practice of "*Igba-oso-afia*" (business shenanigans that happen when a trader sales another trader's goods at a higher price with the added margin retained) is prevalent within the scheme.

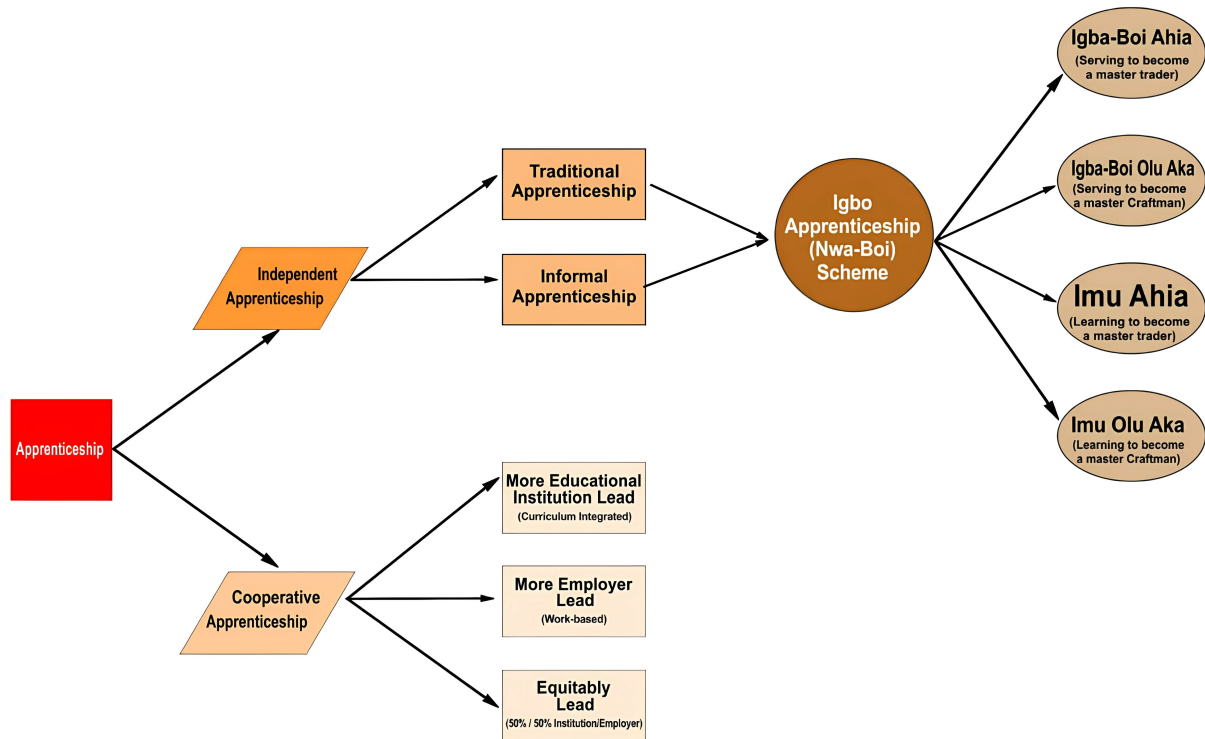


Figure 1. Topology of Apprenticeship. Source: An illustration of the author (2024)

Traditional apprenticeship within the Igbo community involves the transmission of skills within the family unit, forming a cultural legacy passed down through generations. Typically, this involves the transfer of skills from a parent to their child or close relatives, deeply rooted in native customs, traditional norms, and family lineage, whether patrilineal or matrilineal. This aligns with the findings of Igwe et al. [21], who highlight the strong connection between traditional apprenticeship and native customs, as well as its association with kingship structures.

Informal apprenticeship encompasses a system where skills are transferred from a master trader/craftsperson to a young apprentice, extending beyond immediate family ties to encompass wider kinship groups and social networks within the local community. Contracts for informal apprenticeships between masters and apprentices typically lack official recognition from the government and do not receive government funding.

Ejo-Orusa et al. [22] outline three key phases that apprentices of the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme are expected to pass through: Talent Ability Identification, Tutorship/Skill/Knowledge Training, and Settlement (*Idu-uno*). This structured approach ensures that apprentices are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in their chosen trade or craft.

2.1.4. Talent/Ability Identification

The initial phase of the scheme, Talent/Ability Identification, typically commences within the household of a prospective apprentice. This phase may arise from various factors, such as the household's inability to support the further literary education of a young individual or the individual's non-compliance with basic household rules. In such cases, the family seeks out an entrepreneur willing to take the individual as an apprentice. Upon finding a suitable match, a traditional handover ceremony takes place, during which parents impart advice to the apprentice regarding the virtues and expectations associated with apprenticeship. It is during this ceremony that apprenticeship agreements are discussed and ratified by all parties involved.

Central to the essence of Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme is the apprentice's total commitment to serving their master (*Oga*) without any financial obligation. This principle, as described by Chinweuba et al. [23], is rooted in Igbo cosmological beliefs encapsulated by the proverb "*Onye fee Eze, Eze eruo ya*" (he who serves the King shall be King thereafter). However, this servitude is limited to a specified period, typically lasting between 4 to 8 years, depending on the agreed duration. The agreement may be formalized either orally or in writing.

The second phase of the scheme, known as **tutorship/skill training**, holds pivotal importance. Within the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme framework, effective tutorship necessitates that an apprentice resides with their master/*Oga* and his family throughout the

duration of their apprenticeship. Beyond merely being an apprentice, the individual becomes an integral part of the *Oga's* household. They are expected to undertake minor chores and assimilate basic aspects of daily living. The initiation and trial of the apprentice typically occur within the initial three months of his arrival. This period serves as a probationary phase, during which the apprentice's aptitude for the training and other responsibilities is evaluated. Throughout these initial months, the apprentice begins to observe, imitate, and practice alongside his master (and possibly other senior apprentices), learning the fundamental aspects of the trade. At the conclusion of the trial period, the master assesses whether to continue with the apprenticeship arrangement. Simultaneously, the apprentice evaluates his affinity for the trade, a factor that influences his decision to continue with the apprenticeship.

Several key factors play a crucial role in determining whether an apprentice continues or is released after the initial three months: his "willingness to learn," "resilience," and "trustworthiness." An apprentice who successfully navigates this initial stage typically exhibits a strong desire to continue with his apprenticeship, which serves as the foundation for his entrepreneurial journey ahead.

Subsequently, the apprentice enters the **nurturing phase**, where he receives instruction in fundamental business strategies. This includes learning about market competitiveness, understanding market dynamics and language, honing bargaining skills, mastering customer negotiation techniques, implementing inventory control and management practices, seizing entrepreneurial opportunities, fostering positive customer relationships, and managing transaction processes. Additionally, apprentices are encouraged to cultivate resilience to navigate the challenges inherent in business growth and development.

Approximately two years to the end of the agreed apprenticeship period, the master grants the apprentice greater autonomy, akin to an examination. In many cases, the apprentice is entrusted with managing a new branch of the business, allowing them to apply their acquired knowledge and skills to practice. This phase serves as a test of the apprentice's competence, as his performance in this role significantly influences the amount of seed capital, which he will receive upon completing his apprenticeship. Upon successfully passing this test, the apprentice is deemed ready for "settlement," marking the culmination of their apprenticeship journey.

Settlement (*Idu-uno*) marks the concluding phase of the apprenticeship scheme, occurring at the end of the agreed-period between both parties. This phase is celebrated with a freedom party, serving as both a graduation and commencement ceremony for the former apprentice as he embarks on his entrepreneurial journey known as "*Idu-uno*." During this ceremony, attended by the apprentice's family members, the master/*Oga* offers prayers, blessings and provides seed capital to facilitate the

establishment of the apprentice's own trade. Additionally, the master/*Oga* pledges to offer necessary business mentorship until the apprentice achieves a certain level of business maturity. Furthermore, the master/*Oga* may extend an offer to enter into a business partnership with the apprentice, based on his performance during the apprenticeship period. This offer can be accepted or politely declined by the apprentice, now taking on the role of a new, but young Master/*Oga*.

2.1.5. Challenges of the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme

A notable challenge of the Igbo apprenticeship scheme is its lack of structured classroom instruction and formal curriculum, resulting in no certification upon completion. The scheme often enrolls individuals who are not academically inclined, as well as those considered mavericks or outcasts (*Ofuogoli*), with the aim of providing them with better future prospects. According to Adekola et al. [24], this perception persists that the scheme is primarily for those who struggle in the formal education system or whose families cannot afford traditional schooling. This stigma makes it difficult to attract young graduates and school-aged youths to the apprenticeship system, as it is often seen as a last resort for those who are not successful in conventional education. Consequently, participants in the apprenticeship program do not receive the same level of respect and recognition as their peers in formal educational institutions.

One significant challenge of the Igbo apprenticeship scheme is the sudden dismissal of apprentices for dubious reasons, such as accusations of theft, inappropriate relationships with the master's wife, or disobedience. Such dismissals can be particularly devastating for apprentices from poor backgrounds, as they may struggle to find the startup capital needed to pursue their own enterprises.

Another issue is the inconsistent settlement of apprentices at the end of their training. This can lead to abuse and neglect of duties by masters, highlighting the lack of legal protection for young apprentices. Since these apprenticeship agreements are often verbal, it is difficult for apprentices to take legal action against their masters. This underscores the need for a robust legal framework to protect both the master (*Oga*) and the apprentice (*Boi*) in their contractual relationship.

Other challenges affecting the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme are; there are instances of apprentices (*Umu Boi*) stealing from their masters (*Ndi Oga*) through various methods, such as: Underreporting proceeds from transactions, especially those involving goods supplied to customers from another dealer's shop (known as "*Oso-afia*") amongst others.

Another growing concern is the emergence of a new group of wealthy individuals, whose sources of wealth are often unclear, has also emerged as influential figures in politics, the economy and community leadership. Their presence undermines the apprenticeship scheme by

reducing the enthusiasm and commitment of young men, who now view joining the scheme as unappealing.

2.1.6. Types of the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme

The Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme can be categorized into four traditional channels as depicted in figure 1, each channel is designed to facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge from masters (*Ndi Oga*) to their apprentices. These categories differ in their approach, duration, and structure: ***Igba Boi ahia***: Serving to become a master trader, ***Igba Boi olu aka***: Serving to become a master craftsman, ***Imu ahia***: Learning to become a master trader and ***Imu olu aka***: Learning to become a master craftsman. These distinctions are outlined in the work of [2].

(i) ***Igba Boi Ahia* (Serving to Become a Master Trader):**

The ***Igba Boi Ahia*** channel of the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme is tailored for those seeking skills solely in commerce. In this channel, the apprentices live with the master (*Oga*) and, besides learning the trade, perform various domestic chores throughout the agreed apprenticeship period. The apprentices do not pay any fees to the master. It is the master's responsibility to care, cloth and pick every other bill for the apprentices' wellbeing and provide them with seed capitals to start their own businesses upon completion of the apprenticeship. The duration of this apprenticeship channel typically ranges from six to eight years.

(ii) ***Igba Boi Olu Aka* (Serving to Become a Master Craftsman):**

The ***Igba Boi Olu Aka*** channel of the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme is designed for those seeking technical skills. In this channel, the apprentices live with the master (*Oga*) and, in addition to learning the craft, perform various domestic chores throughout the apprenticeship period. The apprentice does not pay any fees for this training. It is the master's responsibility to care, cloth and pick every other bill for the apprentices' wellbeing and provide them with the necessary equipment and tools to start their own workshop. The duration of this apprenticeship channel typically ranges from six to eight years.

(iii) ***Imu Ahia* (Learning to Become a Master Trader):**

The ***Imu Ahia*** channel of the Igbo Apprenticeship system is intended for individuals seeking to learn skills in commerce only.

(iv) ***Imu Olu Aka* (Learning to Become a Master Craftsman):**

The ***Imu Olu Aka*** channel of the Igbo Apprenticeship system is designed for individuals seeking to learn technical skills.

The common denominators of both ***Imu ahia*** and ***Imu olu-aka*** are; The individuals seeking to be trained via these channels are mostly mature adults who may have

completed secondary or even university education. These individuals choose to learn a specific craft to further their expertise. The apprentices in this case may or may not live with the master (*Oga*). But, if the apprentices reside with the *Oga*, they are also expected to perform various domestic chores during the apprenticeship period. Tutorship fees for this channel are typically paid by the apprentice's parents or sponsors, as noted by Iwara et al. [25]. The payment often includes drinks for the entertainment of witnesses, usually other tradesmen from the local community. The fee is a lump sum agreed upon by both parties and is payable before the full apprenticeship begins, following a probation period. The responsibility of providing the necessary equipment and tools/seed capital to start a workshop/business falls on each apprentice's parents/guardians after the Master's blessings upon successful completion of the apprentices' indentureship. The typical duration of this apprenticeship channel is relatively short, lasting about two to four years.

The universality amongst the four channels of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme is; the apprentices gain exposure to various supply channels for goods and services, both locally and internationally, depending on the master's network and operational level. This exposure helps the apprentices build valuable connections and knowledge, which are crucial for establishing his own business at end of his indentureship. Additionally, the apprentices learn essential management skills and financial discipline by observing the master's coordination of personal and business affairs. Furthermore, the master continues to offer business guidance until the apprentices reach a certain level of business maturity. If the master is particularly impressed with the apprentice's performance, he may propose a business partnership with him (the freedom *Boi*)/be employment as a journeyman, which the new master can either accept or politely decline.

2.2. Empirical Literature

A review of relevant empirical literature delves into studies pertinent to the subject of this research.

Ifeanyichukwu et al. [26], delved into the nexus between Igbo apprenticeship, or "*Igba Boi*," and business succession models across Nigeria, Ghana, and the Benin Republic. Employing a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews, they examined the experiences and perceptions of apprentices and mentors within the system. Their findings underscored a positive relationship between apprenticeship exposure and entrepreneurial inclination, underscoring the influence of informal learning and cultural norms on entrepreneurial behaviors. Nonetheless, the reliance on primary data may limit the generalizability of findings to specific contexts within Nigeria.

Abba et al. [27], scrutinized the interplay between Igbo apprenticeship, termed "*Igba Boi*," and entrepreneurial

activity's contribution to the economic development of the southeast region. Employing a quantitative research design, they conducted a survey involving 400 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Utilizing both primary and secondary data, the study employed simple regression analysis via SPSS for data analysis. The findings highlighted primary impediments to Igbo entrepreneurs' success, including funding constraints, fire incidents, and inadequate government support. However, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, and the study's quantitative orientation may overlook qualitative dimensions of apprenticeship experiences.

Okwuowulu [28] assessed the impact of Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) on the development of the Auto Spare Parts Market in Eastern Nigeria. Employing a questionnaire as the primary data source and a judgmental sampling technique to select 246 participants from the Nnewi auto spare parts clusters, the study utilized Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) analysis. The results concluded that the IAS significantly and positively influenced the expansion of the Nnewi Auto Spare Parts Market in the region under study.

Khan et al. [29], explored the impact of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) dimensions on the performance of small enterprises, investigating the mediating role of entrepreneurial competencies (EC). With a sample of 386 small enterprises selected through systematic random sampling, they conducted statistical analyses using SPSS and AMOS software. The findings indicated a positive relationship among all EO constructs directly and through the mediator (EC) on small enterprise performance. However, the focus on small enterprises may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Iwara et al. [25] examined the relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) and entrepreneurial orientation among Igbo youths. Employing qualitative research methods including interviews and content analysis, they explored experiences and perceptions within the apprenticeship system. The findings indicated that apprenticeship fosters entrepreneurial values and skills among participants. However, the qualitative nature of the study may limit its generalizability, and individual-level focus may overlook broader structural influences on entrepreneurial behavior.

Ekesiobi et al. [30] explored the economic assessment of the Igbo entrepreneurship model for entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. Employing mixed-methods research, including surveys, interviews, and case studies, they investigated the experiences and perceptions of apprentices and mentors within the apprenticeship system. While their findings suggested significant influences of apprenticeship experience on entrepreneurial development, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, and qualitative aspects of apprenticeship experiences may not be fully captured through quantitative measures alone.

3. Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon the Social Exchange Theory (SET), as defined by Homans [31], which elucidates the exchange of tangible or intangible activities between two or more parties, with varying degrees of reward or cost. Cost, in this context, primarily refers to the alternative activities or opportunities foregone by the involved actors. SET stands as one of the most influential conceptual frameworks for comprehending workplace dynamics. A fundamental principle of SET posits that relationships progress over time to form trusting, loyal, and mutually committed bonds, contingent upon adherence to certain "rules" of exchange. These rules constitute a normative framework within the exchange relationship, shaping participants' behaviors [32]. In essence, the utilization of SET in organizational behavior models is grounded in the principles of exchange rules, with much of management research focusing on expectations of reciprocity.

Reciprocity manifests as interdependent exchanges which necessitate bidirectional transactions - something given and something returned. Consequently, interdependence, characterized by mutual and complementary arrangements, is deemed a defining feature of social exchange [33].

Figure 2 depicts the social exchange circular flow of benefits which the researcher articulated to underscore the interdependence and complementary arrangements inherent in the relationship between a Master/Oga and an apprentice. Here, the master commits to providing the learning platform for training the apprentice, feed, clothe, health care of the apprentices and providing seed capital for the apprentice upon completion of his/her apprenticeship, in exchange for the apprentice's dedicated service, errands, and tasks undertaken during the agreed learning period.

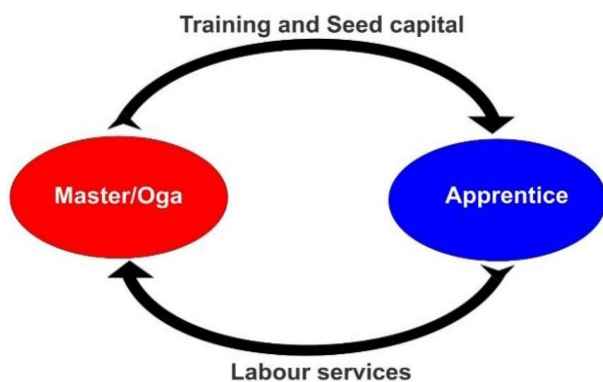


Figure 2. Social Exchange Circular Flow of Benefit. **Source:** An illustration of the author (2024)

The mutual obligations arising from the series of interactions and responsibilities outlined in their agreement, as articulated orally (Emerson, 1976), further corroborate the principles of social exchange theory (SET), which

centers on reciprocity as interdependent exchanges, and is evident in the reciprocal actions of both the *Oga* and the apprentice. This reciprocity drives the growth of the business venture involving the *Oga* and *Nwaboi*, with the amount of seed capital the *Nwaboi* receives upon completion of his apprenticeship, known as "*Idu-uno*," contingent upon the collaborative efforts of both parties. It is this bidirectional transaction, emblematic of their interdependence, that underpins the essence of social exchange theory (SET).

3.2. Method

A quantitative research method was adopted to enable the study to obtain measurable, quantifiable and testable empirical evidence that provides answers to the research questions. Survey research design was used for this study. Responses were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents. The area of study is Anambra state, Nigeria. The researcher selected one major market from each senatorial zone of the state i.e., Onitsha main market in Anambra North senatorial zone, Eke Awka market in Anambra Central senatorial zone and Nnewi automotive spare parts market in Anambra South senatorial zone.

Based on the infinite nature of the population of the study, the optimum cross-sectional sample size of 384 for an infinite population as proposed by Cochran [34] was adopted in the study for each of the three markets: Onitsha Main Market (Anambra North Senatorial Zone), Eke Awka Market (Anambra Central Senatorial Zone), and Nnewi Automotive Spare Parts Market (Anambra South Senatorial Zone). Consequently, the sample size of 384 was multiplied by 3, resulting in a total of 1,152. The justification for this is that the population of business owners who passed through the Igbo Apprentice (*Igba Boi*) scheme in each of the three selected markets is infinite, thereby giving us aggregated sample size of 1,152 for the study.

3.3. Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire served as the primary tool for data collection. This questionnaire aimed to gather insights from participants regarding their perceptions of the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme. Each dimension under scrutiny was assessed using five distinct items. Additionally, entrepreneurial orientation, encompassing autonomy, competitive aggressiveness, innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking, each dimension within entrepreneurial orientation was evaluated using five items. On average, participants spent approximately 20 minutes completing the questionnaire.

3.4. Model Specification

To address the study's objectives, five multiple linear

regression models were developed. These models aimed to examine how the five dimensions of the Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme influence each of the five dimensions of Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO). Each dimension of entrepreneurial orientation was considered a function of all the five dimensions of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme. This approach aimed to establish the mathematical relationship between the dependent variables and the explanatory variables.

Thus; Model 3.1 shows that MSMEs autonomy (AUT) is determined by the Source of seed capital at the end of apprentices indentureship (SSC), Exposure of business owners to the apprenticeship scheme (EBOA), Elements of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme (EIAS), Perceived Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme on business owners (PIIAS) and Business Turn Over (BTO).

$$\text{AUT} = f(\text{SSC}, \text{EBOA}, \text{EIAS}, \text{PIIAS} \text{ and } \text{BTO}) \quad 3.1$$

The functional equation 3.1, when transformed into an econometric model, thus;

$$\text{AUT} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{SSC} + \beta_2\text{EBOA} + \beta_3\text{EIAS} + \beta_4\text{PIIAS} + \beta_5\text{BTO} + \mu_1 \quad 3.2$$

Model 3.3 shows that MSMEs competitive aggressiveness (COA) is determined by the Source of seed capital at the end of apprentices indentureship (SSC), Exposure of business owners to the apprenticeship scheme (EBOA), Elements of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme (EIAS), Perceived Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme on business owners (PIIAS) and Business Turn Over (BTO).

$$\text{COA} = f(\text{SSC}, \text{EBOA}, \text{EIAS}, \text{PIIAS} \text{ and } \text{BTO}) \quad 3.3$$

The functional equation 3.3, when transformed into an econometric model, thus;

$$\text{COA} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1\text{SSC} + \alpha_2\text{EBOA} + \alpha_3\text{EIAS} + \alpha_4\text{PIIAS} + \alpha_5\text{BTO} + \mu_2 \quad 3.4$$

Model 3.5 shows that MSMEs innovativeness (INN) is determined by the Source of seed capital at the end of apprentices indentureship (SSC), Exposure of business owners to the apprenticeship scheme (EBOA), Elements of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme (EIAS), Perceived Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme on business owners (PIIAS) and Business Turn Over (BTO).

$$\text{INN} = f(\text{SSC}, \text{EBOA}, \text{EIAS}, \text{PIIAS} \text{ and } \text{BTO}) \quad 3.5$$

The functional equation 3.5, when transformed into an econometric model, thus;

$$\text{INN} = \Psi_0 + \Psi_1\text{SSC} + \Psi_2\text{EBOA} + \Psi_3\text{EIAS} + \Psi_4\text{PIIAS} + \Psi_5\text{BTO} + \mu_3 \quad 3.6$$

Model 3.7 shows that MSMEs proactiveness (PRO) is determined by the Source of seed capital at the end of apprentices indentureship (SSC), Exposure of business owners to the apprenticeship scheme (EBOA), Elements of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme (EIAS), Perceived Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme on business owners (PIIAS) and Business Turn Over (BTO).

$$\text{PRO} = f(\text{SSC}, \text{EBOA}, \text{EIAS}, \text{PIIAS} \text{ and } \text{BTO}) \quad 3.7$$

The functional equation 3.7, when transformed into an econometric model, thus;

$$\text{PRO} = \Omega_0 + \Omega_1\text{SSC} + \Omega_2\text{EBOA} + \Omega_3\text{EIAS} + \Omega_4\text{PIIAS} + \Omega_5\text{BTO} + \mu_4 \quad 3.8$$

Model 3.9 shows that MSMEs risk taking ability (RTA) is determined by the Source of seed capital at the end of apprentices indentureship (SSC), Exposure of Business owners to the apprenticeship scheme (EBOA), Elements of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme (EIAS), Perceived Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme on business owners (PIIAS) and Business Turn Over (BTO).

$$\text{RTA} = f(\text{SSC}, \text{EBOA}, \text{EIAS}, \text{PIIAS} \text{ and } \text{BTO}) \quad 3.9$$

The functional equation 3.9, when transformed into an econometric model, thus;

$$\text{RTA} = \phi_0 + \phi_1\text{SSC} + \phi_2\text{EBOA} + \phi_3\text{EIAS} + \phi_4\text{PIIAS} + \phi_5\text{BTO} + \mu_5 \quad 3.10$$

4. Presentation and Analysis of Data

This section provides an analysis of the data collected for the study. The primary data were gathered to address the research questions and evaluate the hypotheses. The data were derived from a survey conducted among respondents in three selected markets: Onitsha main market, Eke Awka market, and Nnewi automotive spare parts market, situated in Anambra, Nigeria. As contained in Table 1, a total of 1,152 questionnaires were distributed to the chosen respondents. Among these, 1,085 were returned and found to be properly completed and relevant to the study, while the remaining 67 were incomplete. The data obtained were analyzed using simple percentage calculations and presented in tables. Additionally, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses.

Table 1. Proportion of respondents from the three selected markets

Market	No of questionnaires distributed	No of questionnaires collected
Onitsha main market	384 (100%)	365 (95.05%)
Eke Awka market	384 (100%)	353 (91.93%)
Nnewi automotive spare parts market	384 (100%)	367 (95.57%)
	1,152	1,085

Source: Field Survey (2024)

4.1. Test of Hypotheses

- Test of Hypothesis One**

The result of test of hypothesis one is as contained in Table 2.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and autonomy of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

$$AUT = \beta_0 + \beta_1SSC + \beta_2EBOA + \beta_3EIAS + \beta_4PIIAS + \beta_5BTO + \mu_1 \quad 3.2$$

In testing hypothesis one as contained in Table 2, the output reveals that an R-Square of 0.683; and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.681 signifies a positive relationship between the DV and IVs. This means that the model theoretically explains a 68.1% variation in the DV. The statistical significance of the model is measured by the F-statistic. The F-stat in the ANOVA Table shows that the regression model is a good fit for the data with a value of 380.984 which had a p-value of .000; indicating that the model is

statistically significant {Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme} and has a significant effect on the DV (autonomy).

- Test of Hypothesis Two**

The result of test of hypothesis two is as contained in Table 3.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and competitive aggressiveness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

$$COA = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1SSC + \alpha_2EBOA + \alpha_3EIAS + \alpha_4PIIAS + \alpha_5BTO + \mu_2 \quad 3.4$$

In testing hypothesis two as contained in Table 3, the output reveals that an R-Square of 0.670; and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.669 signifies a positive relationship between the DV and IVs. This means that the model theoretically explains a 66.9% variation in the DV. The statistical significance of the model is measured by the F-statistic.

Table 2. Model summary of test of hypothesis one

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.345739	0.118018	2.929548	0.0035
SSC	-0.251623	0.037665	-6.680611	0.0000
EBOA	0.047567	0.025003	1.902424	0.0574
EIAS	0.010077	0.027206	0.370382	0.7112
PIIAS	0.661976	0.039023	16.96384	0.0000
BTO	0.436289	0.032861	13.27696	0.0000
R-squared	0.682786			
Adjusted R-squared	0.680994			
F-statistic	380.9838			
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: E-Views 10

Table 3. Model summary of test of hypothesis two

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.553042	0.116657	4.740746	0.0000
SSC	-0.259672	0.037230	-6.974707	0.0000
EBOA	0.044737	0.024715	1.810105	0.0706
EIAS	0.032272	0.026893	1.200048	0.2304
PIIAS	0.483396	0.038573	12.53201	0.0000
BTO	0.557558	0.032482	17.16526	0.0000
R-squared	0.670524			
Adjusted R-squared	0.668663			
F-statistic	360.2168			
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: E-Views 10

The F-statistic in the ANOVA Table shows that the regression model is a good fit for the data with a value of 360.217 which had a *p*-value of .000; indicating that the model is statistically significant {Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme} and has a significant effect on the DV (competitive aggressiveness).

• **Test of Hypothesis Three**

The result of test of hypothesis three is as contained in Table 4.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and innovativeness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

$$INN = \Psi_0 + \Psi_1SSC + \Psi_2EBOA + \Psi_3EIAS + \Psi_4PIIAS + \Psi_5BTO + \mu_3 \quad 3.6$$

In testing hypothesis three as contained in Table 4, the output reveals that an R-Square of 0.492; and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.490 (approximately) signifies a positive relationship between the DV and IVs. This means that the model theoretically explains a 49.0% variation in the DV. The statistical significance of the model is measured by the F-statistic.

The F-statistic in the ANOVA Table shows that the regression model is a good fit for the data with a value of 171.728 which had a *p*-value of .000; indicating that the model is statistically significant {Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme} and has a significant effect on the DV (innovativeness).

• **Test of Hypothesis Four**

The result of test of hypothesis four is as contained in Table 5.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and proactiveness of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

$$PRO = \Omega_0 + \Omega_1SSC + \Omega_2EBOA + \Omega_3EIAS + \Omega_4PIIAS + \Omega_5BTO + \mu_4 \quad 3.8$$

In testing hypothesis four as contained in Table 5, the output reveals that an R-Square of 0.754; and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.752 signifies a positive relationship between the DV and IVs. This means that the model theoretically explains a 75.2% variation in the DV. The statistical significance of the model is measured by the F-statistic.

The F-statistic in the ANOVA Table shows that the regression model is a good fit for the data with a value of 541.306 which had a *p*-value of .000; indicating that the model is statistically significant {Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme} and has a significant effect on the dependent variable (proactiveness).

• **Test of Hypothesis Five**

The result of test of hypothesis five is as contained in Table 6.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and risk taking of MSMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

$$RTA = \phi_0 + \phi_1SSC + \phi_2EBOA + \phi_3EIAS + \phi_4PIIAS + \phi_5BTO + \mu_5 \quad 3.10$$

In testing hypothesis five as contained in Table 6, the output reveals that an R-Square of 0.594; and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.592 signifies a positive relationship between the DV and IVs. This means that the model theoretically explains a 59.2% variation in the DV. The statistical significance of the model is measured by the F-statistic.

The F-statistic in the ANOVA Table shows that the regression model is a good fit for the data with a value of 258.966 which had a *p*-value of .000; indicating that the model is statistically significant {Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme} and has a significant effect on the dependent variable (risk taking).

Table 4. Model summary of test of hypothesis three

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.723253	0.172518	4.192341	0.0000
SSC	-0.351271	0.055058	-6.380023	0.0000
EBOA	0.073126	0.036550	2.000716	0.0457
EIAS	-0.067240	0.039770	-1.690733	0.0912
PIIAS	0.784018	0.057043	13.74427	0.0000
BTO	0.373817	0.048035	7.782106	0.0000
R-squared	0.492441			
Adjusted R-squared	0.489573			
F-statistic	171.7278			
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: E-Views 10

Table 5. Model summary of test of hypothesis four

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.100093	0.101442	0.986698	0.3241
SSC	-0.179663	0.032375	-5.549494	0.0000
EBOA	0.027761	0.021492	1.291730	0.1968
EIAS	0.046101	0.023385	1.971363	0.0490
PIIAS	0.480813	0.033542	14.33462	0.0000
BTO	0.587029	0.028245	20.78322	0.0000
R-squared	0.753587			
Adjusted R-squared	0.752195			
F-statistic	541.3057			
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: E-Views 10

Table 6. Model summary of test of hypothesis five

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.487866	0.142858	3.415030	0.0007
SSC	-0.305773	0.045592	-6.706671	0.0000
EBOA	0.065662	0.030266	2.169498	0.0303
EIAS	-0.33778	0.032933	-1.025668	0.3053
PIIAS	0.747770	0.047236	15.83039	0.0000
BTO	0.391541	0.039777	9.843352	0.0000
R-squared	0.594005			
Adjusted R-squared	0.591712			
F-statistic	258.9665			

Source: E-Views 10

5. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Summary of Findings

The findings from the empirical data analysis above are summarised in this section indicating:

That the P-values of SSC, EBOA and BTO for the five models are (0.0000), EIAS for models 4 is (0.049) and EBOA for model 5 is (0.030) and therefore revealed that they are statistically significant. While the P-values of EBOA and EIAS for models 1, 2 and 3 are (0.057 and 0.711, 0.071 and 0.230, 0.057 and 0.0912 respectively), EBOA for models 4 is (0.197) and EIAS for model 5 is (0.305) also revealed that they are not statistically significant.

In addition to the revelations of Tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, it is also seen that the coefficients of SSC are negative in the test of the five stated null hypothesis of the study, i.e., (-0.251623), (-0.259672), (-0.351271), (-0.179663) and (-0.179663) for hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. The negative values of these hypothesis brought to fore the

inverse relationships between the independent variable SSC with all the five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation, ie, autonomy, marketing aggressiveness, innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking ability. The import of this inverse relationship is that as different forms of seed-capital are increasing, the ability of the apprenticeship graduands to deploy and make use of the potency of the five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation diminishes.

The above result prompted the researcher to go back to the three markets where the study was carried out to further probe the reason for the negative values of the coefficients of SSC for the five linear regression models used for the study. From what the researcher gathered from the traders, there are both unfulfilled personal needs and gross deprivations that act as both spring board/lever and slip disc for the apprenticeship graduands (the freedom *bois*) ie, now new Masters/*Ndi-Oga* green-horn businesses. Because during the period of apprenticeship, most of the apprentices lived/served with gross lack and unfulfilled personal needs as young persons especially in the midst of the affluence/wealth of their Masters/*Ndi-Oga*. So, the

condition of serving with that degree of lack and some of their basic needs not being met while lubricating and supporting the businesses of their Masters/*Ndi-Oga* during their apprenticeship period could become spring board/lever or slip disc for some apprentices upon graduation from their apprenticeship.

- It becomes a **spring board/lever** when the condition upon which the apprentices serve their apprenticeship spurs them on to work hard and continue with that conservative life style of lack to on the average, keep their daily expenditure low which will lead to spending little or at least less than their daily earnings in other to grow their seed capitals.
- It also becomes a **slip disc** when upon graduation from apprenticeship, the apprentices become in a hurry to catch up with all that they dreamt/desired to enjoy while they were serving and this entails spending on the average, more than their earnings on daily basis i.e., spending from their seed-capitals which in turn slows down the process of seed-capital growth/capital accumulation and eventually lead to them losing their seed-capitals and go bankrupt.

Unfortunately, most of these apprentices allowed the condition under which they served their apprenticeships become slip disc for them. This made those settled/*idu-uno* with different ranges of seed-capital not to do well in their businesses.

The researcher was also made to understand that about over 50% of business owners that are doing very well in their businesses within the markets were not settled with any seed-capital by their masters which has collaborated the result of the researcher's analysis. Although, most of the incidents of not being settled/*idu-uno* are not the faults of the apprentices on their own, but were victims of different circumstances like; death, lunacy or bankruptcy of their *Oga*/Master towards their freedom time. That the success story of this segment of business owners is hinged on the use of marketing shenanigan called "*Igba-oso-afia*" defined by the researcher as (business shenanigans that happens when a trader sales another trader's goods at a higher price with the added margin retained) and the utilization of the social capital built while he was serving his *Oga*/Master to source goods most times on credit. Knowing the original sources of goods and services is as a result of a holistic dynamic of relationships; between an individual *Oga* and the entire apprentices within a trade cluster/market, an individual apprentice with all the Masters/*Ndi-Oga* also within the same trade cluster/market and an inter-trade clusters/markets relationships between all the Masters/*Ndi-Oga* and all the apprentices of different trade clusters which greatly impacts positively on the apprentices resilience, proactiveness, marketing aggressiveness, innovativeness and his ability to take calculated risk.

From the above probe of why the negative values of the coefficients of SSC, the study has thrown-up an accidental

paradox, although beyond the limit of the objectives of the study, which the researcher encapsulated as "**Quasi-success guaranty of the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme**" which stipulates that beyond the primary motivation of skills acquisition and provision of seed capital of the scheme, that an apprentice that passes through the scheme has a high chance of business success with or without the seed capital. That the main drivers of the scheme are skills, knowledge and the inter-dependence of the principal actor in the scheme, which are **Masters/*Ndi-Oga* and Apprentices/*Umu-Boi***.

5.2. Conclusions

The study therefore concludes that, there are statistical significant relationships between (Source of Seed-Capital at the End of Apprentices Indentureship, Exposure of Business Owners to the Apprenticeship Scheme and Business Turn Over) the dimensions of the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme and the five (Autonomy, Competitive Aggressiveness, Innovativeness, Proactiveness and Risk Taking Ability) dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation for the five models and statistically insignificant relationships between (Elements of Igbo Apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) Scheme and Perceived Impact of Igbo Apprenticeship Scheme on Business Owners) dimensions of the Igbo apprenticeship scheme and the five dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation of MSMEs in Anambra state.

5.3. Recommendations

Inferring from the results above the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. The Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme should be used to enhance autonomy: The Masters/*Ogas* should encourage apprentices to think independently and imaginatively. They should support their efforts to try out novel concepts and solutions.
2. Utilizing the Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme as a platform for nurturing a competitive mindset is imperative. Such an initiative can furnish apprentices with the requisite skills and resilience necessary to excel in highly competitive business landscapes.
3. The Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme nurture a culture of innovation among apprentices: Highlighting the significance of ongoing learning and personal development in cultivating an innovative culture among apprentices.
4. Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme fosters proactiveness: In addition to equipping apprentices with valuable skills, also instills a sense of responsibility, independence and prepare individuals ready to succeed in their chosen career paths.
5. The Igbo apprenticeship (*Igba Boi*) scheme plays a pivotal role in nurturing apprentices' confidence, skills, and resilience, which are vital for embracing

risk-taking as an integral component of entrepreneurship. Through this scheme, apprentices can cultivate the ability to set practical and achievable goals that encourage them to push beyond their comfort zones and undertake calculated risks.

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