IOSR Journal of Applied Chemistry (IOSR-JAC)
e-ISSN: 2278-5736.Volume 19, Issue 10 Ser. I (October. 2026), PP 34-46
www.iosrjournals.org

Effect of Igbo Apprenticeship System on the Reduction of Unemployment in Ebonyi State: A Study of Ebonyi State Motor Spare Parts Market (Site), Abakaliki

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Abstract
This study examined the impact of Igbo Apprenticeship System (Igba Boi) on unemployment reduction in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The aim of the study is to examine the extent mentorship, practical learning, contact networking, trust building and share interest reduced unemployment in Ebonyi State. The question is, how can these practical steps aid in the reduction of unemployment? The area of study is Abakaliki Motor Spare Parts (Site). Questionnaire and interviews were the main tool for data collection. Out of 466 questionnaires distributed, 450 were returned (96.6%) and 16 (3.4%) were not returned. The investigation used mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Regression analysis statistics was used as the data analytic approach. The results showed that there is substantial correlation between the degree to which mentoring reduces unemployment (42.3%), and a strong correlation to the degree practical learning reduces unemployment (54.8%). The data demonstrated a substantial association to which contact networking reduces unemployment (56.6%). Furthermore, the study showed how shared interest reduces unemployment (43.8%). The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between the extent trust building reduces unemployment (40.9%). It concluded that a significant relationship exists between mentorship, practical learning, contact networking, shared interest, trust building and unemployment reduction in Ebonyi State. The study recommended that mentorship, practical learning, contact networking, shared interest and trust building should be encouraged and genuinely sustained for the reduction of unemployment and job creation in Ebonyi State.

Key Words. *Mentorship, entrepreneur, Igba Boi, practical learning, networking, shared interest, unemployment.*

Date of Submission: 27-10-2026 Date of Acceptance: 06-11-2026

I. INTRODUCTION

At Abakaliki Motor Spare Parts (Site) one sees some youths learning one trade or another as well as working under the supervision of the mentor. It is the duty of the master (*Oga*) to help the servant (*Nwa Boi*) to learn the trade and to earn a living through the learnt trade. In this apprenticeship system, the apprentices (*Umu Boi*) who are entrusted to their master (*Oga*) by their parents or guardians agree to be mentored by the master so as to acquire practical skill through first- hand experience and to master the intricacies of the particular trade. The apprenticeship system serves as an extension of the Igbo business spirit, which is locally referred to as "*Oga*," inducting *Nwa Boi* into entrepreneurial ventures. This informal practice lacks structured training programme but enables apprentices to learn and master skills necessary for their entrepreneurial endeavour (Bala & Nyaga, 2024, p. 213). The Igbo apprentice system, also referred to as "*Igba-Boi*" (learning a skill) or "*Imu-Ahia*" (learning a trade) or "*Imu-Olu*" (learning a particular type of work) (Nwafam & Onukwube, 2026, p. 342) is a framework of informal agreement that promote business communities among the Igbo people. Originating from South-Eastern Nigeria, it has moved to every part of Nigeria and beyond (Nwagu, 2023, p. 11). This practice aims at engaging youths, reducing unemployment and idealness, stimulating business starters, encourage economic stability, as well as sustainable livelihood by financing human resources through occupational training (Bala & Nyaga, 2024, p. 213), that culminates in the trainee getting "cash infusion and assistance to start up their own businesses" (Okloi, 2022, p. 19).

Statement of the Problem. Igbo businessmen and women have been successful due to their resilience and practice of right business strategy. By implications, Igbos have established what could be referred to as a business culture (Nwafam & Onukwube, 2026, p. 342). However, the entrepreneurial spirit of some misguided Igbo youths has led to unreasonable pursuit of "get rich at all cost." Furthermore, the Igbo apprentices seem to focus their attention

on the wrong direction as the majority of the youths seek immediate financial gratification and shortcut to making money (Daniel & Ahmed, 2022, p. 3). The urge for globalization and modernization has created dreadful tendencies among Igbo investors who now struggle to join the international business world to the detriment of the local investment. Regrettably too, some *Ogas* do not give mentees (*Nwa Boi*) who passed through the apprenticeship system the required capital to establish their own businesses. Such *nwa boi* could be labelled a miscreant or accused of embezzling the *Oga's* money. Many of such apprentices are made to leave with nothing. This ugly incidence happens mostly halfway into the settlement period, thereby leaving the said apprentice frustrated. Within the modern "consumer culture" (Slater, 1997, p.1), the emphases on "material acquisition" (McCracken, 2005, p. 3) and "the get-rich quick syndrome" many youths are no longer interested in apprenticeship (Nwafam & Onukwube, 2026, p. 342). They would rather engage in activities that promote immediate gratification, such as entertainment industries, fashion parade and social media marketing. As a result, the number of young people willing to become apprentices has declined, and many skilled artisans are struggling to find successors (Nwafam & Onukwube, 2026, p. 342).

Scope of the Study. This study covers the effect of Igbo apprenticeship system on the reduction of unemployment in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. The study is restricted to Abakaliki Motor Parts Market (Site). It is not on apprenticeship in Anambra State (Iwueke, Halima, Oparaku, 2020) or any other part of Igboland. The sampling and data collection were done at the Abakaliki Motor Parts (Site). Abakaliki is in Ebonyi State, which was created on October 1, 1996 from the South-Eastern States of Nigeria (Obi-Onwurah, 2025). Ebonyi State is bounded in the North by Benue State, in the East by Cross River State, in the South by Abia State and in the West by Enugu State. She is made up of thirteen local government areas and the major language in Ebonyi State is Igbo. They are mostly agrarians (Obi-Onurah, 2025). According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2023), Ebonyi State has an estimated population of 3,204,631. Ebonyi State lies at 6.2649^0 N and 8.0137^0 E. The religion practiced by Ebonyi State people includes African traditional religion, Christianity and Islam.

Objective of the Study. The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of the Igbo apprenticeship system on unemployment reduction in Ebonyi State, with particular focus on its challenges and prospects. The specific objectives of the study are, to:

i. Determine the effect of mentorship on unemployment reduction.
ii. Examine the effect of practical learning on unemployment reduction.
iii. Assess the effect of contact networking on unemployment reduction.
iv. Investigate the effect of shared interest on unemployment reduction.
v. Determine the effect of trust building on unemployment reduction.

Research Question. In line with the specific objectives of this study, the following research questions are formulated:

i. To what extent does mentorship contribute to unemployment reduction?
ii. To what extent does practical learning contribute to unemployment reduction?
iii. To what extent does contact networking contribute to unemployment reduction?
iv. To what extent does shared interest contribute to unemployment reduction?
v. To what extent does trust building contribute to unemployment reduction?

Significance of the Study. This study is beneficial to government agencies, entrepreneurs, managers of organizations, leaders of the Abakaliki Spare Parts Market (Site), masters (*Ndi Oga*), apprentices (*umu boi*) and researchers, etc., because it laid emphasis on the benefits of Igbo apprenticeship system. By laying emphases on the importance of the various apprenticeship schemes and the developmental skills for various persons, the study is also useful to all apprentices. This study adds to the existing literature in the field of apprenticeship and would serve as a reference material for empirical review to future studies.

II. Methodology

We used mixed method of qualitative (collection of non-numerical data, through observation and interviews) and quantitative (collection of numerical data, using statistical tools) to explore the (Pilcher & Cortazzi, 2023, p. 2358) "Effect of Igbo Apprenticeship System on Reduction of Unemployment in Ebonyi State - A study of Ebonyi State Motor Spare Parts Market (Site) in Abakaliki." The study used structured questionnaire and interviews for data collection. The answer to the research questions were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested with chi-square and single regression analysis (Rana & Singha, 2015, p. 69).

According to the chairman of Ebonyi State Motor Spare Parts Dealers Association (2025), the numbers of the "*Ogas*" and "*Umu boi*" are estimated at Four thousand Six hundred and forty-five (4,645). The authors used Taro Yamane statistical formula (Bala & Nyaga, 2024, p. 212). The formula used is:

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

n = Sample size
N = Total Population
e = Degree of confidence interval, in this research study, 95% confident interval was adopted which is equal to 0.05
Substituting and solving for n we have:

$$n = \frac{4{,}645}{1 + 4{,}645(0.05)^2}$$
$$n = 465.5$$
$$n = 466$$

A total of 466 respondents constituted the sample size of the study. The constant (independent) variable is reduction in unemployment and the dynamic (dependent) variables are mentorship, practical learning, contact networking, trust building and shared interest. The research relied exclusively on data collected at the Abakaliki Motor Spare Parts (Site) through the administration of structured questionnaire and interviews. This process ensured that the instrument adequately covered the content area and provided an accurate measure of the variables under consideration.

The instrument used in this study was subjected to a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha. (Saputra, 2025, p.791). The 466 completed questionnaire were analyzed and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.889. This value lies within the acceptable range for reliability and indicates that the instrument was internally consistent and dependable for the measurement of the constructs examined in the study (Saputra, 2025, p.793). Regression analysis "which allows for the analysis of the relationships between one independent and dependent variable" (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014, p.194) was used to determine the extent to which mentorship, practical learning, contact networking, shared interest, and trust building influenced unemployment reduction at the Abakaliki Motor Spare Parts Market (Site) (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014, p.194). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was also used to measure the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables (Bala & Nyaga, 2024, p. 212). These analytical techniques provide the basis for understanding how different components of the Igbo apprenticeship system contribute to employment outcome within the study area (Nwafam & Onukwube, 2026, p. 342).
The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient represented by the symbol ***r***, was used in the analysis of the data to determine the degree of association between the variables. The formula is expressed thus:

$$r = \frac{\boldsymbol{n}\Sigma\boldsymbol{xy} - \sum \boldsymbol{x}\,\Sigma\boldsymbol{y}}{\sqrt{\boldsymbol{n}[x^2 - (\Sigma\boldsymbol{x})^2]\;\boldsymbol{n}y^2 - (\Sigma\boldsymbol{y})^2}}$$

This coefficient provided insight into the linear relationship between the independent variable associated with the apprenticeship system and the dependent variable relating to unemployment reduction. (Stewart, 2026). Data in the form of table and percentage absolute figure are presented and analyzed. Inferences and deductions are used to draw conclusion from the statistical tool used for necessary administration and management on effect of Igbo apprenticeship system on reduction of unemployment in Ebonyi State.

The Literature Gap

The place of the study is localized. This study is specifically in Abakaliki Motor Spare Parts Market (Site). We reviewed literatures on *Igba Boi* in Igbo cosmology. Nwafam, & Onukwube (2026) are concerned with the decline of traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) and the socio-cultural implications in relation to Igbo identity. Iwueke, Halima & Oparaku (2020) maintain that the level of education of apprentice determines the acquisition ability of the trade impacted on mentee, which is on South Eastern Nigeria. These studies failed to be detailed in the area of reduction of unemployment especially in Ebonyi State. While other literatures are broad, this study is specific and located *in* Abakaliki. The preposition *in* is locative and specific.

Conceptual Framework

The following key concepts are relevant to the study. Effect refers to the changes that occur as a result of a particular action or intervention within the context of the Igbo apprenticeship system which help in the reduction of unemployment (Nwafam & Onukwube, 2026, p. 343). The noun apprenticeship is a four-to-six-year training arrangement in which an individual acquires skills and knowledge in a traditional trade system under the supervision of a craftsperson **(**Iwara, Amaechi, & Vhonani, 2019, p. 227). It is a coordinated system where practical learning is organized and executed to achieve specific goals, such as the ability to help the young person to acquire a skill (Lucas & Hanson, 2021, pp. 6-10). This has an effect on the economy, the reduction of unemployment. Unemployment is a condition in which individuals who are able and willing to work are without

jobs and are actively seeking employment (Chukwudinso, Nwangwu, & Njaka, 2023, p. 291). Unemployment can be curbed through apprenticeship system, which is known as *Imu Oru Aka* (learning a skill) or *Imu Izu Ahia* (learning a business), where an apprentice works under the guidance of the master (*Oga*) for a specified number of years to acquire skills, knowledge, and to be given capital to start an independent venture (Okloi, 2022, p.18), which is also known as "capacity building" (Lucas & Hanson, 2021, p. 6).

Mentorship is a developmental relationship in which an experienced individual (mentor) provides guidance in learning a skill to a less experienced person (mentee). Mentorship aids in personal and entrepreneurial growth (Nwafam & Onukwube, 2026, p. 342). The first-hand training involves real-life activities and experiences that allow the mentee to acquire practical skills relevant to a particular trade (Okloi, 2022, p. 18). This process involves creating, nurturing, and maintaining relationships with individuals and groups who can provide support, information, business opportunities and professional connections (Nwagu. 2023, p. 13). The mentees have shared interest, that is, the pursuit of the goal that encourage collaboration, cooperation and joint participation. It also helps them to build trust among themselves. Trust Building is the deliberate process of establishing confidence, credibility, reliability and honesty which promotes stronger relationship that enhances cooperation within the apprenticeship system (Chukwudinso, Nwangwu, & Njaka, p. 297).

The expression Igbo apprenticeship "is intergenerational means of transmitting technical skills and tacit knowledge from the master to the apprentice (Iwueke, Halima & Oparaku, 2020, p. 184). The Igbo apprenticeship training system is a human resource developmental scheme that blends practical learning with shared interest, networking and trust building which prepare individuals to set-up, own and run independent businesses (Iwara, Amaechi, & Vhonani, 2019, p. 227). The Igbo apprenticeship system is an "*Oga – Nwa boi*" (Master-Servant) relationship which is not servitude, whereby the master settles the servant at the completion of the apprenticeship. The Igbo apprenticeship system was brought to the limelight in Nigeria after the Nigerian-Biafran civil war (Iwuajoku, & Uwandu, 2026, p. 37). Many parents who were left with nothing were forced to send their children (8-20 years) to traders for apprenticeship. Usually, the mode of settlement is contained in the agreement (Onyima, Nzewi & Chikezie, 2013, p. 2).

Theoretical Framework

We have many recent works on Igbo cosmology and the concept of *Igba Boi* in Igboland. We reviewed the work of Nwafam, & Onukwube (2026) who are worried about the decline in traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) and the socio-cultural implications in relation to the Igbo identity. We disagree with their affixing their work on Igbo identity. The Igbo people have other characteristics outside the *Igba Boi*. Iwueke, Halima & Oparaku (2020) maintain that the level of education of an apprentice determines the acquisition ability of the trade impacted on the mentee. They forgot that *Igba Boi* began as informal education. The third work is authored by John Nzubechi Iwuajoku and Bright Ikenna Uwandu (2026), "From Apprenticeship to Enterprise: The Evolution of the *Igba Boi* System and Its Role in Contemporary Igbo Economic Development." This work upholds the evolution of *Igba Boi* System and its relevance to the modern society. This theory agrees with our view that the *Igba Boi* system reduces the unemployment problem in Abakaliki Motor Spare Parts Market (Site).

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents, Data Presentation and Analysis

Questionnaires were distributed to a total of 466 masters (*ogas)* and apprentices (u*mu boi)* at Ebonyi State Motor Spare Parts Market (Site) Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. 450 questionnaires were returned (96.6%), while 16 were not returned (3.4%). The data collected for this study are statistically analyzed and presented in Tables, frequency and percentage tables are used with charts in the presentation.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

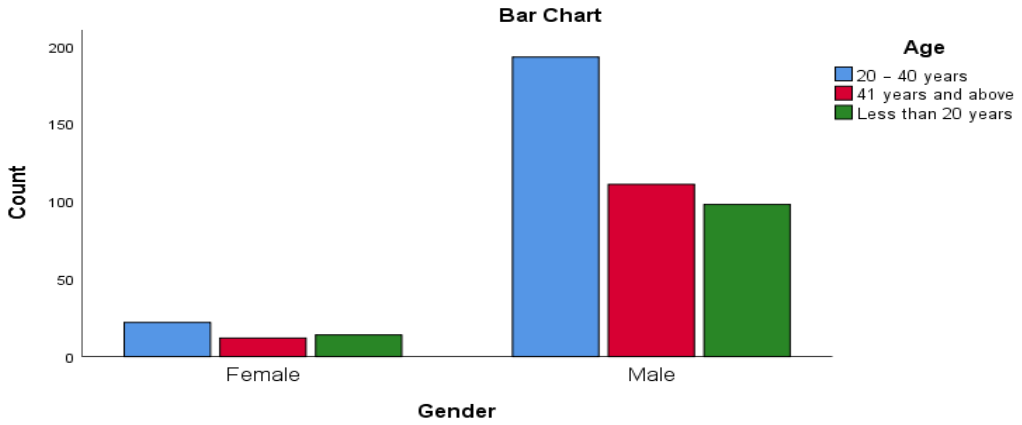
SN	Variable	Item	Frequency	%
1	**Gender**	Male	402	89
		Female	48	11
2	**Age**	Less than 20 years	112	24.9
		20 – 40 years	215	47.8
		41 years and above	123	27.3
3	**Marital Status**	Single	223	49.6
		Married	207	46
		Widowed	20	4.4
4	**Academic Background**	No Formal Education	58	12.9
		Primary Education	168	37.3

		Secondary Education	136	30.2
		Tertiary Education	88	19.6
5	**Kind of Business Involved**	Buying and Selling	142	31.6
		Welding & Dismantling	81	18
		Oil & Lubrication	58	12.9
		Painting	32	7.1
		Electrical & Fittings	54	12
		Mechanics	68	15.1
		Others	15	3.3
6	**Designation**	Masters (Ogas)	162	36
		Apprentice (Umuboi)	288	64

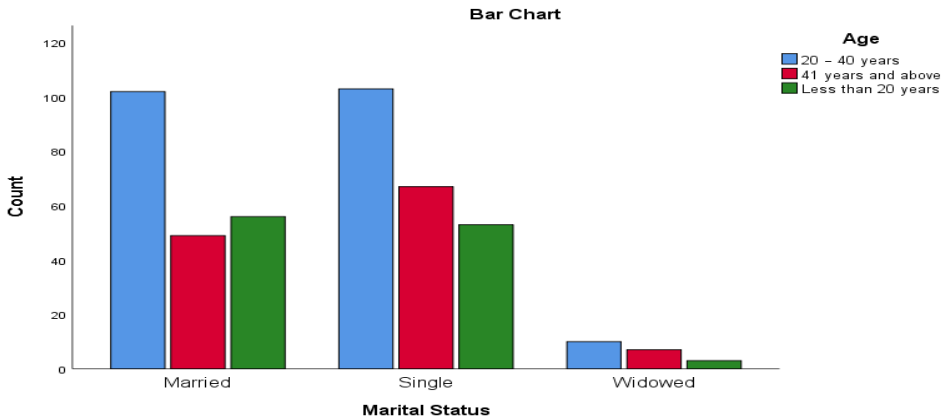
Source: Authors' Fieldwork September, 2025

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The gender distribution indicates that the market is overwhelmingly male-dominated, as 402 respondents (89%) are male, while only 48 respondents (11%) are female. This distribution reflects the general occupational structure of the Ebonyi State Motor Spare Parts Market (Site), Abakaliki which is largely carried out by men.

The age distribution reveals that 112 respondents (24.9%) were below 20 years, 215 respondents (47.8%) fell between the ages of 20 and 40, while 123 respondents (27.3%) were 41 years and above. These findings show that the majority of individuals engaged in business activities within the market are young adults.

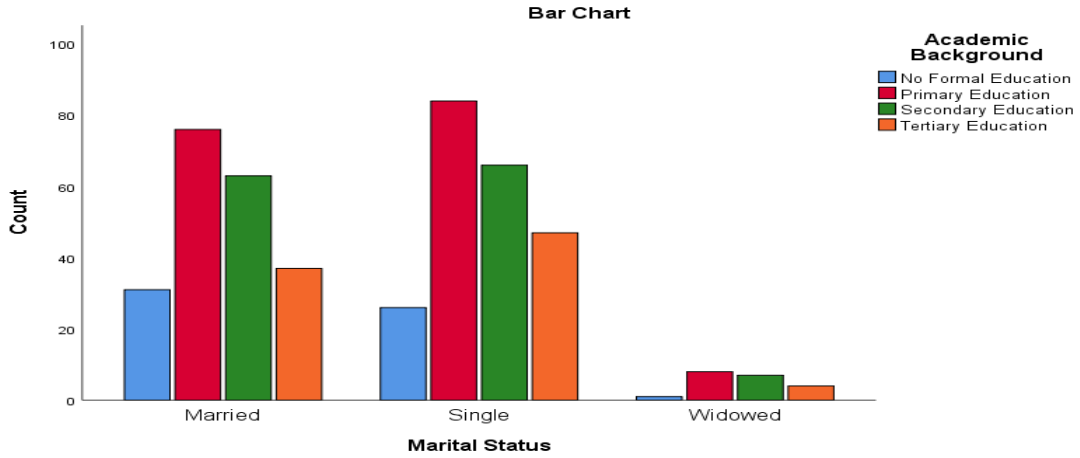


With respect to marital status, 223 respondents (49.6%) are single, 207 respondents (46%) are married, and 20 respondents (4.4%) are widowed. This pattern indicates that almost half of the workforce within the market are composed of unmarried persons.

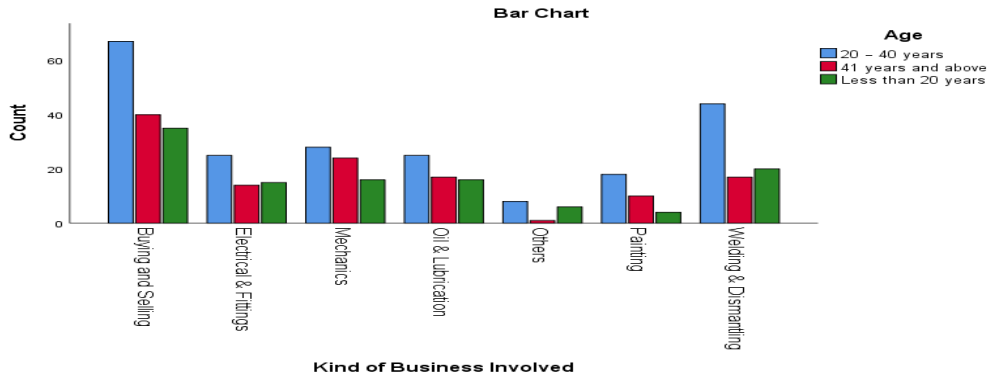


The academic background of the respondents shows varied educational exposure. 58 respondents (12.9%) had no formal education, while 168 respondents (37.3%) had primary education, 136 respondents (30.2%) had secondary

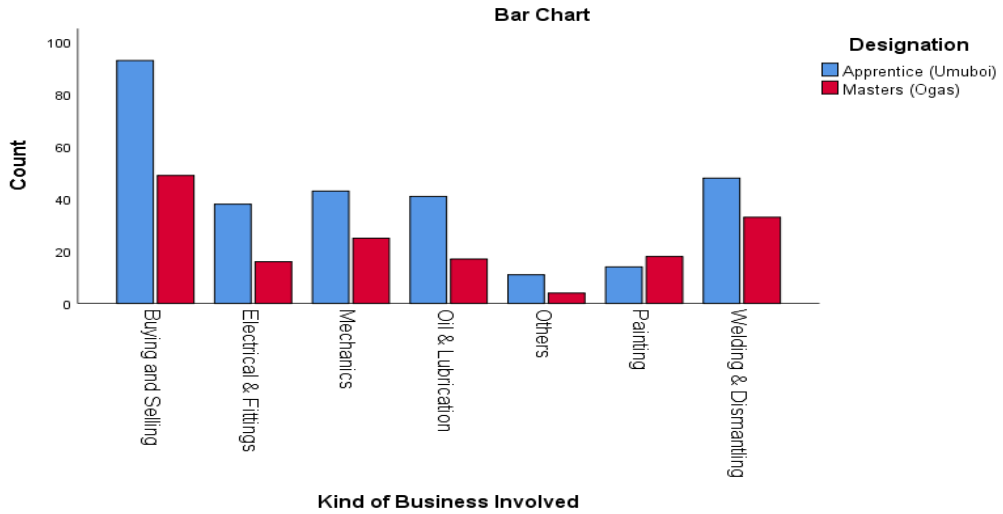
education, and 88 respondents (19.6%) attained tertiary education. The implication is that a significant proportion of participants completed only primary school, which reflects the vocational nature of the apprenticeship system.



In terms of the business activities respondents were engaged in, 142 (31.6%) are involved in buying and selling of motor spare parts, 81 (18%) are in welding and dismantling, 58 (12.9%) are in oil and lubrication, 32 (7.1%) are in painting, 54 (12%) worked in electrical and fittings, and 68 (15.1%) are mechanics, while 15 respondents (3.3%) are engaged in other categories of trade. This distribution suggests that buying and selling constitute the most prevalent line of business within the market.



Finally, the designation of respondents shows that 162 persons (36%) are masters (*Ogas*), while 288 individuals (64%) are apprentices (*Umu boi*). This proportion indicates that the majority of respondents are apprentices



Presentation of Data Based on Research Questions

The analyses presented in this section are derived from Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computation using Pearson correlation and regression techniques to determine the influence of each apprenticeship component on unemployment reduction.

Research Question 1
To what extent does mentorship reduce unemployment?

TABLE 2: Descriptive Summary for variables (Model 1)

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Does Mentorship Reduce Unemployment	2.33	1.154	450
Unemployment Reduction	2.03	1.035	450

TABLE 3: Correlation Matrix for Model 1

Correlation	Does Mentorship Reduce Unemployment	Unemployment Reduction
Pearson Correlation Does Mentorship Reduce Unemployment	1.000	.651
Unemployment Reduction	.000	.
N	450	450

TABLE 4: Model 1 Regression Summary

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1 .651[a]	.423	.422	.877

a. Predictors: (Constant), Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 5: ANOVA for Model 1

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	252.980	1	252.980	328.809	.000[b]
Residual	344.684	448	.769		
Total	597.664	449			

a. Dependent Variable: Does Mentorship Reduce Unemployment
b. Predictors: (Constant) Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 6: Regression Coefficients for Model 1

Unstandardized coefficient / Standardized coefficients

Model	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	
1	**(Constant)**	.859	.091		9.431	.000	.680
	Unemployment Reduction	.726	.040	.651	18.133	.000	.647

a. Dependent Variable: Does Mentorship Reduce Unemployment
b. Predictors: (Constant) Unemployment Reduction

The descriptive results show the perception of respondents regarding mentorship and unemployment reduction, with a mean value of 2.33 and a standard deviation of 1.154 for mentorship, while unemployment reduction recorded a mean of 2.03 and standard deviation of 1.035. Correlation analysis reveals a moderately strong and statistically significant relationship between mentorship and unemployment reduction ($r = 0.651$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model shows an R^2 value of 0.423, indicating that 42.3% of the variation in the perception that mentorship reduces unemployment can be predicted from unemployment-reduction outcome. The regression coefficient ($B = 0.726$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrates that as unemployment-reduction scores increase, respondents' perception of mentorship's impact on reducing unemployment also rises. The ANOVA result confirms the overall significance of the model ($F = 328.809$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that mentorship plays a meaningful role in shaping employment outcome within the market.

Research Question 2
To what extent does practical learning reduce unemployment?

TABLE 7: Descriptive Summary for variables (Model 2)

Does Practical Learning Reduce Unemployment	2.36	1.373	450
Unemployment Reduction	2.03	1.035	450

TABLE 8: Correlations Matrix for Model 2

	Does Practical Learning Reduce Unemployment	Unemployment Reduction
Pearson Correlation Does Practical Learning Reduce Unemployment	.741	1.000
Unemployment Reduction	.741	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed) Does Practical Learning Reduce Unemployment	.000	
N	450	450

TABLE 9: Model 2 Regression Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
.741[a]	.548	.547	.924

Predictors: (Constant), Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 10: ANOVA for Model 2

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	464.045	1	464.045	543.957	.000[b]
Residual	382.186	448	.853		
Total	846.231	449			

a. Dependent Variable: Does Mentorship Reduce Unemployment

b. Predictors: (Constant) Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 11: Regression Coefficients for Model 2

Unstandardized Coefficients/ Standardized Coefficients

Model	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound
(Constant)	.371	.096		3.866	.000	.182
Unemployment Reduction	.983	.042	.741	23.323	.000	.900

a. Dependent Variable: Does Practical Learning Reduce Unemployment

The descriptive statistics show a mean of 2.36 (SD = 1.373) for practical learning and a mean of 2.03 (SD = 1.035) for unemployment reduction. The correlation coefficient indicates a strong positive and significant association ($r = 0.741$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis yields an R^2 value of 0.548, meaning that practical learning explains 54.8% of the variation in perceived unemployment reduction. The regression coefficient ($B = 0.983$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that improved practical learning experience significantly enhance respondents' perception of reduced unemployment. The ANOVA result ($F = 543.957$, $p < 0.001$) further demonstrates that the model is highly significant. Practical learning emerges as one of the most influential components in reducing unemployment among apprentices and traders.

Research Question 3

To what extent does contact networking reduce unemployment?

TABLE 12: Descriptive Summary for variable (Model 3)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Does Contact Networking Reduce Unemployment	1.71	.883	450
Unemployment Reduction	2.03	1.035	450

TABLE 13: Correlation Matrix for Model 3

		Does Contact Networking Reduce Unemployment Num	Unemployment Reduction
Pearson Correlation	**Does Contact Networking Reduce Unemployment Num**	1.000	.752
	Unemployment Reduction	.752	1.000
Sig. (1- tailed)	**Does Contact Networking Reduce Unemployment Num**	.	.000
	Unemployment Reduction	.000	.

N	**Does Contact Networking Reduce Unemployment Num**	450	450
	Unemployment Reduction	450	450

TABLE 14: Model 3 Regression Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.752[a]	.566	.565	.583

a. Predictors: (Constant), Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 15: ANOVA for Model 3

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	**Regression**	198.346	1	198.346	584.221	.000[b]
	Residual	152.098	448	.340		
	Total	350.444	449			

a. Dependent Variable: Does Contact Networking Reduce Unemployment num

b. Predictors: (Constant), Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 16: Regression Coefficient for Model 3

Model	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for Lower Bound
(Constant)	.408	.061		6.738	.000	.289
Unemployment Reduction	.642	.027	.752	24.171	.000	.590

a. Dependent Variable: Does Networking Reduce Unemployment

The descriptive statistics show a mean of 1.71 (SD = 0.883) for contact networking. The correlation analysis indicates a strong positive relationship between contact networking and unemployment reduction ($r = 0.752$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model records an R^2 value of 0.566, suggesting that 56.6% of the variation are in the belief that networking reduces unemployment. The regression coefficient ($B = 0.642$, $p < 0.001$) affirms that stronger contact networking leads to a higher perception of unemployment reduction. With an ANOVA value of $F = 584.221$ ($p < 0.001$), the model is statistically significant. Contact networking therefore stands out as a major determinant of employability and entrepreneurial success within the market.

Research Question 4

To what extent does shared interest reduce unemployment?

TABLE 17: Descriptive Summary for variables (Model 4)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Does Shared Interest Reduce Unemployment Num	2.18	1.348	450
Unemployment Reduction	2.03	1.035	450

TABLE 18: Correlation Matrix for Model 4

		Does Shared Interest Reduce Unemployment Num	Unemployment Reduction
Pearson Correlation	**Does Shared Interest Reduce Unemployment Num**	1.000	.662
	Unemployment Reduction	.662	1.000
Sig. (1- tailed)	**Does Shared Interest Reduce Unemployment**	.	.000
	Unemployment Reduction	.000	.
N	**Does Shared Interest Reduce Unemployment**	450	450
	Unemployment Reduction	450	450

TABLE 19: Model 4 Regression Summary

Model R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.662[a]	.438	.437	1.011

a. Predictors: (Constant), Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 20: ANOVA for Model 4

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
1	Regression	357.649	1	357.649	349.808	.000[b]
	Residual	458.042	448	1.022		
	Total	815.691	449			

a. Dependent Variable: Does Shared Interest reduce unemployment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 21: Regression Coefficients for Model 4

Unstandardized Coefficients/ Standardized Coefficients

Model	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound
(Constant)	.434	.105		4.135	.000	.228
Unemployment Reduction	.863	.046	.662	18.703	.000	.772

a. Dependent Variable: Does Shared Interest Reduce Unemployment

The descriptive results show a mean of 2.18 (SD = 1.348) for shared interest. A positive and significant correlation was observed between shared interest and unemployment reduction ($r = 0.662$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model yielded an R^2 value of 0.438, implying that shared interest accounts for 43.8% of the variation in unemployment-reduction perception. The regression coefficient ($B = 0.863$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrates that increased alignment in shared interests enhances respondents' perception of unemployment reduction. The ANOVA statistic ($F = 349.808$, $p < 0.001$) confirms the model's validity. This shows that collaboration through shared interest contributes meaningfully to unemployment reduction.

Research Question 5

To what extent does trust building reduce unemployment?

TABLE 22: Descriptive Summary for variables (Model 5)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Does Trust Building Reduce Unemployment Num	2.38	1.199	450
Unemployment Reduction	2.03	1.035	450

TABLE 23: Correlation Matrix for Model 5

		Does Trust Building Reduce Unemployment Num	Unemployment Reduction
Pearson Correlation	Does Trust Building Reduce Unemployment Num	1.000	.639
	Unemployment Reduction	.639	1.000
Sig. (1- tailed)	Does Trust Building Reduce Unemployment Num	.	.000
	Unemployment Reduction	.000	.
N	Does Trust Building Reduce Unemployment Num	450	450
	Unemployment Reduction	450	450

TABLE 24: Model 5 Regression Summary

Model R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.639[a]	.409	.407	.923

a. Predictors: (Constant), Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 25: ANOVA for Model 5

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
1	Regression	263.822	1	263.822	309.440	.000[b]
	Residual	381.956	448	.853		
	Total	645.778	449			

a. Dependent Variable: Does Trust Building reduce unemployment
b. Predictors: (Constant), Unemployment Reduction

TABLE 26: Regression Coefficients for Model 5

Unstandardized Coefficients/ Standardized Coefficients

Model	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig	95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound
(Constant)	.875	.096		9.120	.000	.686
Unemployment Reduction	.741	.042	.639	17.591	.000	.658

a. Dependent Variable: Does Trust Building Reduce Unemployment

The analysis shows a mean of 2.38 (SD = 1.199) for trust building. The correlation coefficient shows a moderately strong positive relationship between trust building and unemployment reduction ($r = 0.639$, $p < 0.001$). The regression result shows an R^2 value of 0.409, indicating that trust building explains 40.9% of the variation in perceived unemployment reduction. The regression coefficient ($B = 0.741$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that stronger trust relationship significantly increase the perception that unemployment is being reduced. The model is confirmed as significant by the ANOVA ($F = 309.440$, $p < 0.001$). These findings imply that trust, although slightly less influential than the other variables, still plays an essential role in effective apprenticeship outcome.

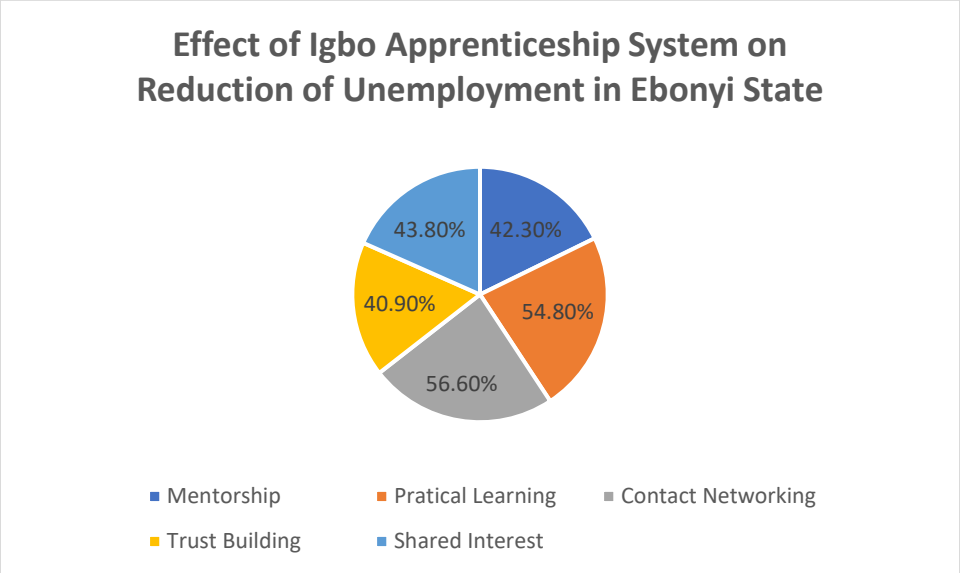


Figure Two. A Pie Chart representing the regression analysis of Effect of Igbo Apprenticeship System on Reduction of Unemployment in Ebonyi State

III. Discussion of Findings

The analyses demonstrate that all five variables, mentorship, practical learning, contact networking, shared interest, and trust building have positive and statistical meaningful relationships with unemployment reduction. Among these variables, contact networking ($R^2 = 0.566$) and practical learning ($R^2 = 0.548$) exert the strongest influence, highlighting the importance of professional relationship and hand-on learning in shaping employment outcome. Shared interest ($R^2 = 0.438$), mentorship ($R^2 = 0.423$) and trust building ($R^2 = 0.409$) contributed substantially, though to a lesser degree. The ANOVA results accompanying each regression model confirm that the predictors collectively explain significant portions of the variance in unemployment-reduction perception, indicating that these apprenticeship components are central to addressing unemployment in Ebonyi State.

Given these findings, any meaningful intervention aimed at reducing unemployment in the Ebonyi State Motor Spare Parts Market should prioritize strengthening contact networking opportunities and enhancing practical learning experience for apprentices. At the same time, sustained efforts to deepen mentorship, encourage shared interest, and cultivate trust among participants remain essential for maximizing the full potential of the Igbo Apprenticeship System.

Evaluation. A closer examination at the Igbo apprenticeship system shows that the system served its purpose, however, it is latterly being watered down by the fact that the Generations Z and Alpha are no longer interested in "*Imu Oru Aka*" or "*Imu Izu Ahia*" and "*Igba Boi*". They rely on quick ways of making money such as online

marking, social media gambling, the use of Artificial Intelligence in learning, etc. Some youths take to the negative side of life such internet fraudsters. "The strong desire to quickly acquire financial wealth while doing almost nothing tangible or worthy of the financial rewards they seek for has led many Nigerian youths into immoral and criminal acts such as fraud, kidnapping, robbery, 'money rituals', human organs harvesting, and drug dealings." (Daniel & Ahmed, 2022, p. 3). Hence, there is the need to remotivate the youths especially the Generations Z and Alpha to go back to their roots and relearn what they thought was outdated and a waste of time.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the Igbo apprenticeship system has significant and positive effect on the reduction of unemployment rate in Ebonyi State. Each of the examined variables, mentorship, practical learning, contact networking, shared interest and trust building demonstrated meaningful influence on employment outcome among apprentices and traders in Abakaliki Motor Spare Parts Market. The Igbo apprenticeship system, therefore, remains an effective socio-economic framework through which the people address unemployment, wealth creation and human capital building. By equipping young people with practical skills, business knowledge, social networking, etc., the Igbo apprenticeship system continues to serve as the functional model for tackling unemployment through entrepreneurial development. Through an apprenticeship scheme known as "Igba-boi", the Igbo have dominated and continued to excel above their contemporaries in Nigeria and beyond (Iwara, Amaechi & Netshandama, 2019, p. 227).

The Igbos abhor idleness. Each person must contribute to the welfare and economic growth of the community. In order to be part of this reality, Igbo people everywhere struggle to transform economic resources within their control from lower to higher productivity and greater yield deriving strength from Igbo philosophy of life "*Onye ruo*, *O rie*" (only the person who works can eat). Their ability to take calculated risks, be innovative and mobilize resources allow them to create new businesses opportunities, new productions and genuine services, thereby generating wealth and stimulating economic activity where others failed.

Recommendation. The authors recommend that the state government, the traditional rulers and religious leaders should encourage culturalism, whereby these institutions invest time and money in promoting traditional business method of *Igba Boi*. It is not out of place to allow those who wish to be bankers, engineers, automobile and robotic mechanics, business administrators, bakers, doctors and nurses to have practical observatory learning while they are in secondary schools.

Learning of skills should be introduced into the primary and secondary school curricula so that the children could start learning skill as early as possible. If one does not want to continue in academical pursuit, they could continue with the trade they learnt in primary and secondary schools.

There is the need to organize seminars and workshops on the culture of team spirit, team work and networking among the youths. This networking should mirror the Ubuntu philosophy, "I Am Because We Are." This is group capacity building which could lead to trust building and genuine growth.

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