

**THE DECLINE OF TRADITIONAL IGBO
APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM (*Igba Bqi*) AND its
SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS ON IGBO
IDENTITY**

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Abstract

This study examined the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bqi*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. The traditional apprenticeship system historically served as an important institution for youth empowerment, entrepreneurial training, moral upbringing, and cultural transmission among the Igbo people. However, the system has

gradually declined due to modernization, globalization, western influence, economic hardship, and the increasing desire for quick wealth among youths. The problem of the study arises from the growing erosion of Igbo cultural values, unemployment, moral decadence, and weakening communal relationships associated with the decline of the apprenticeship institution. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A total of 350 respondents were selected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques from selected Igbo communities in southeastern Nigeria. Data were collected through questionnaires, oral interviews, textbooks, and journal materials, while descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that modernization, globalization, and the quest for quick wealth are major factors responsible for the decline of *Igba Bọj*. The study further discovered that the decline has contributed to unemployment, loss of mentorship, erosion of communal values, and weakening of Igbo cultural identity. The study concluded that the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system poses serious socio-cultural challenges to contemporary Igbo society. The study recommended cultural re-orientation, government support for apprenticeship programs, and the revival of mentorship and settlement practices among Igbo business owners.

Keywords: *Igba Bọi*, Apprenticeship System, Igbo Identity, Socio-Cultural Values, Youth Empowerment

Introduction

The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system, popularly known as *Igba Bọi*, has for centuries remained one of the most significant socio-economic and cultural institutions among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria. The system is a structured form of informal education and business mentorship in which a young person, usually called a *boy* or apprentice, serves under a master for a specified number of years in order to acquire entrepreneurial skills, business experience, moral discipline, and social orientation. At the completion of the apprenticeship period, the master settles the apprentice financially or materially to enable him establish an independent business venture. This indigenous economic model contributed greatly to the commercial success, resilience, and socio-cultural unity of the Igbo society. It also served as a mechanism for wealth redistribution, youth empowerment, social mobility, and communal solidarity.

Traditionally, the *Igba Bọi* system was not merely an economic arrangement but also a cultural institution deeply rooted in Igbo values such as hard work, honesty, loyalty, perseverance, humility, and respect for elders.

Through the apprenticeship process, young people were socialized into acceptable societal norms and collective identity. The institution strengthened kinship relationships and promoted communal interdependence, thereby sustaining the socio-cultural fabric of Igbo society. Many successful Igbo businessmen and industrialists emerged through this indigenous training system, making it one of the foundations of Igbo economic advancement both within and outside Nigeria.

However, in recent decades, there has been a noticeable decline in the practice and effectiveness of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system. Several factors have contributed to this decline, including modernization, globalization, urbanization, western education, technological changes, migration, economic instability, and the increasing quest for quick wealth among youths. The rise of internet fraud, get-rich-quick mentality, and changing social values have also weakened the patience and commitment traditionally associated with apprenticeship training. Many young people now prefer white-collar jobs or instant financial success rather than undergoing years of business tutelage under a master. In some cases, mistrust, exploitation, and disputes between masters and apprentices have further discouraged participation in the system.

The decline of *Igba Boi* has generated serious socio-cultural implications for Igbo identity and communal

life. As the institution weakens, core Igbo values of communalism, diligence, mentorship, and economic cooperation are gradually eroding. The weakening of this cultural institution threatens the continuity of indigenous knowledge systems and the preservation of Igbo cultural identity. Furthermore, the decline has contributed to rising unemployment, youth restiveness, social disorientation, and moral decadence among some Igbo youths who no longer benefit from the traditional structures of mentorship and character formation.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. The study aims to explore the causes of the decline, assess its effects on Igbo socio-cultural values, and suggest possible measures for revitalizing the institution in contemporary Igbo society.

Statement of the Problem

The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) was historically one of the major foundations of economic empowerment, cultural transmission, and social stability in Igbo society. Through this institution, young people acquired entrepreneurial skills, moral discipline, and communal values that sustained both individual success and collective identity. However, in recent years, the system has experienced a serious

decline due to modernization, western influence, technological changes, economic hardship, and the growing desire for quick wealth among many youths. The weakening of the apprenticeship system has created noticeable socio-cultural challenges within Igbo society. Many young people no longer embrace the values of patience, hard work, loyalty, and communal responsibility traditionally associated with *Igba Boi*. This decline has contributed to rising unemployment, youth involvement in fraudulent activities, moral decadence, and the gradual erosion of Igbo cultural identity. Furthermore, the breakdown of the traditional mentor-apprentice relationship has reduced opportunities for indigenous business training and economic self-reliance among youths. Despite the historical importance of *Igba Boi* to Igbo socio-economic development, insufficient scholarly attention has been given to its decline and the broader socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system and examine how this decline affects the preservation of Igbo values, cultural identity, and social cohesion in contemporary society.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Boi*)

and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the major factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) in contemporary Igbo society.
2. Investigate the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Igba Bọi* on Igbo values, norms, and identity.
3. Assess the effects of the weakening apprenticeship system on youth empowerment, moral development, and economic self-reliance among Igbo youths.
4. Suggest possible measures for revitalizing the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system as a means of preserving Igbo cultural identity and promoting socio-economic development.

Significance of the Study

This study will be significant to scholars and researchers in the fields of Sociology, African Traditional Studies, Cultural Studies, Entrepreneurship, and Religious Studies. It will contribute to existing literature on the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) by providing deeper understanding of its decline and the

socio-cultural consequences on Igbo identity. The study will also serve as a useful reference material for future academic research on indigenous economic systems and cultural preservation.

The study will also be beneficial to Igbo community leaders, elders, and traditional institutions. It will help them understand the cultural and social dangers associated with the gradual disappearance of the apprenticeship system. Through the findings of this study, they will be encouraged to promote policies and community initiatives aimed at preserving and revitalizing *Igba Bọi* as an important aspect of Igbo heritage and communal life.

Furthermore, the study will benefit government agencies and policy makers concerned with youth empowerment and economic development. The research will reveal how the apprenticeship system historically reduced unemployment and promoted self-reliance among Igbo youths. This will encourage the integration of indigenous apprenticeship models into modern vocational and entrepreneurial development programs.

The study will equally be beneficial to Igbo youths and business owners. Young people will gain awareness of the importance of patience, hard work, mentorship, and skill acquisition embedded in the traditional apprenticeship system. Business owners and

entrepreneurs may also recognize the need to sustain mentorship traditions that promote economic growth, moral discipline, and intergenerational transfer of business knowledge within Igbo society.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Traditional Igbo Apprenticeship System (Igba Bọi)

The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system, popularly known as *Igba Bọi*, has attracted scholarly attention among Nigerian researchers because of its economic, social, and cultural relevance in contemporary society. Different scholars have explained the concept from various perspectives based on entrepreneurship, indigenous knowledge, communalism, and youth development. The following are some scholarly views on the concept of *Igba Bọi* and critical observations by the researcher.

According to Okoro (2023), the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system is an indigenous entrepreneurial training mechanism through which experienced businessmen transfer commercial skills, discipline, and business ethics to younger individuals for economic empowerment and continuity of trade culture. Okoro views *Igba Bọi* primarily as an economic institution designed to reduce poverty and promote self-reliance among Igbo youths. This view is acceptable because it

captures the entrepreneurial foundation of the apprenticeship system and explains why the Igbo people are widely recognized for commercial success across Nigeria and beyond. However, the definition places excessive emphasis on economic empowerment while giving little attention to the socio-cultural and moral dimensions of the institution, such as character formation, communal solidarity, and identity preservation.

Similarly, Ezeani (2024) views *Igba Boi* as a traditional socio-cultural institution through which young people are socialized into Igbo values of patience, loyalty, respect for elders, and communal responsibility while learning vocational and commercial skills under a master. Ezeani's perspective presents the apprenticeship system not merely as business training but as a medium of cultural transmission and moral education. This view is highly acceptable because it recognizes the dual role of the institution in both economic development and cultural preservation. The view reflects the traditional Igbo understanding that wealth creation must be accompanied by moral discipline and social responsibility. Nevertheless, the view could have been broader if it had also considered the role of globalization and modernization in shaping contemporary forms of apprenticeship.

In another perspective, Nwachukwu (2025) describes the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system as an informal indigenous educational structure that functions outside the formal school system and equips youths with practical knowledge, survival skills, and social networks necessary for economic independence. Nwachukwu emphasizes the educational and informal learning dimensions of *Igba Bọi*. This view is commendable because it explains how the apprenticeship system complements formal education by providing practical experience and mentorship that are often absent in conventional academic institutions. However, the definition is limited because it treats the system mainly as an alternative educational model without adequately discussing its deeper cultural significance in sustaining Igbo communal identity and intergenerational relationships.

Furthermore, Obi (2026) views *Igba Bọi* as a communal economic philosophy rooted in reciprocity, mentorship, and wealth redistribution, whereby successful businessmen raise younger entrepreneurs in order to sustain collective economic advancement within Igbo society. Obi argues that the apprenticeship system represents the communal spirit of the Igbo people where success is not viewed as an individual achievement alone but as a collective responsibility. This view is very significant because it highlights the communal and

redistributive nature of the institution which has historically reduced unemployment and strengthened social cohesion among the Igbo. The researcher accepts this view because it reflects the traditional Igbo philosophy of “onye aghala nwanne ya” (do not abandon your brother). However, the definition does not sufficiently address the exploitative tendencies sometimes associated with modern apprenticeship practices, where some masters fail to settle apprentices after years of service.

From the above scholarly views, it can be understood that the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) is not merely an economic arrangement but a multi-dimensional institution involving entrepreneurship, cultural transmission, moral upbringing, communalism, and youth empowerment. The various definitions collectively reveal that the system played a central role in preserving Igbo identity and sustaining socio-economic development before its gradual decline in contemporary society.

Empirical Studies

Adebayo and Okafor (2023) examined the declining indigenous apprenticeship practices and youth unemployment in southeastern Nigeria. The study focused on how the gradual abandonment of traditional apprenticeship systems has contributed to increasing

unemployment and economic dependency among young people in the region. The researchers adopted a survey research design and collected data from traders, apprentices, and unemployed youths across selected states in southeastern Nigeria. The findings revealed that the traditional apprenticeship system formerly played a major role in youth empowerment, skill acquisition, and business sustainability within Igbo society. However, modernization, western education, migration, and the growing desire for quick wealth were identified as major factors responsible for the decline of the system. The study further discovered that the weakening of indigenous apprenticeship practices has increased the rate of youth restiveness, criminal activities, and economic instability among young people. The researchers recommended government support for indigenous entrepreneurial systems and the integration of apprenticeship training into modern youth development policies.

Research Gap: Although the study by Adebayo and Okafor (2023) made important contributions by examining the relationship between declining apprenticeship practices and youth unemployment, it concentrated mainly on the economic implications of the problem. The study did not adequately explore the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Igba Bọi* on Igbo identity, values, communal relationships, and cultural

preservation. Therefore, the current study intends to fill this gap by focusing specifically on how the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system affects Igbo socio-cultural identity and communal life.

Eze and Nwankwo (2024) investigated indigenous entrepreneurship and the survival of Igbo apprenticeship culture in contemporary Nigeria. The study examined the relevance of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in sustaining entrepreneurial development and indigenous business culture despite the pressures of modernization and globalization. The researchers adopted a qualitative research method and gathered data through interviews and observations among traders, business owners, and apprentices in major commercial cities in southeastern Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that the Igbo apprenticeship system has remained a significant indigenous strategy for wealth creation, business continuity, and youth empowerment. The study further showed that despite economic challenges and changing social values, many Igbo businessmen still rely on apprenticeship as a means of transferring entrepreneurial knowledge and maintaining commercial networks. However, the researchers discovered that western education, digital economy, migration, and the increasing preference for white-collar jobs among youths are threatening the survival of the apprenticeship culture. The study concluded that

preserving indigenous entrepreneurial systems is essential for sustainable economic development and recommended stronger community support and policy recognition for apprenticeship practices in Nigeria.

Research Gap: The study by Eze and Nwankwo (2024) focused mainly on indigenous entrepreneurship and the economic survival of the Igbo apprenticeship culture. Although the researchers acknowledged certain social changes affecting the system, they did not critically examine the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Igba Bọi* on Igbo identity, communal values, and cultural continuity. Therefore, the present study intends to fill this gap by specifically investigating how the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system affects the preservation of Igbo socio-cultural identity and communal life.

Nwachinemere and Obiakor (2025) examined the influence of globalization on the erosion of traditional Igbo economic institutions with particular attention to the apprenticeship system in Anambra State. The study aimed at understanding how global economic trends, technological advancement, and western cultural influence have affected the sustainability of the traditional *Igba Bọi* system among the Igbo people. The researchers adopted a mixed-method research approach involving questionnaires, oral interviews, and focus group discussions among traders, apprentices, and

community leaders in selected commercial areas of Anambra State. Findings from the study indicated that globalization has significantly altered the traditional structure of the apprenticeship system by promoting individualism, materialism, and changing youth attitudes toward patience and mentorship. The study further revealed that the increasing dependence on digital business models and formal education has reduced the interest of many youths in traditional apprenticeship training. The researchers argued that the decline of the system threatens indigenous economic practices and weakens intergenerational transfer of entrepreneurial knowledge within Igbo society. The study recommended cultural re-orientation programs and policies aimed at preserving indigenous economic institutions in southeastern Nigeria.

Research Gap: Although Nwachinemere and Obiakor (2025) extensively discussed the effects of globalization on the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system, the study concentrated mainly on the economic and structural dimensions of the institution. The socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Igba Bọi* on Igbo identity, moral values, communal relationships, and cultural continuity were not adequately addressed. Therefore, the present study seeks to fill this gap by critically examining the socio-cultural consequences of the decline

of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system on Igbo identity and communal life.

Umeh and Okeke (2026) investigated the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Igba Bọi* among Igbo youths in southeastern Nigeria. The study focused on understanding how the weakening of the traditional apprenticeship system has affected cultural values, youth behaviour, and communal relationships within Igbo society. The researchers employed a descriptive survey design and collected data through questionnaires and oral interviews conducted among traders, youths, community elders, and traditional leaders across selected communities in southeastern Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that the decline of *Igba Bọi* has contributed to the erosion of important Igbo values such as hard work, respect for elders, patience, communal support, and loyalty. The study also discovered that many youths now pursue quick wealth through unethical means rather than engaging in long-term entrepreneurial mentorship. Furthermore, the researchers observed that the weakening of the apprenticeship system has reduced social cohesion and weakened indigenous mechanisms for youth empowerment and moral formation. The study recommended cultural revival programs, youth re-orientation, and stronger involvement of community leaders in preserving the apprenticeship tradition.

Research Gap: Although Umeh and Okeke (2026) examined the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Igba Bọi*, the study focused mainly on youth behaviour and moral values in southeastern Nigeria generally. The researchers did not adequately examine the broader issue of Igbo identity and how the decline of the apprenticeship system affects cultural continuity, communal consciousness, and the preservation of indigenous socio-economic heritage. Therefore, the current study intends to fill this gap by specifically analyzing the relationship between the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system and the changing nature of Igbo identity in contemporary society.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. The study specifically examines the factors responsible for the decline of the apprenticeship system, the effects of the decline on Igbo cultural values, communal relationships, youth empowerment, and the preservation of Igbo identity in contemporary society. Geographically, the study is limited to selected Igbo communities in southeastern Nigeria where the apprenticeship system has historically been practiced. The study also concentrates on the period between contemporary times and the present era of modernization and globalization which have

significantly influenced indigenous socio-economic institutions among the Igbo people.

Research Questions

1. What are the major factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) in contemporary Igbo society?
2. What are the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Igba Bọi* on Igbo identity and communal values?
3. How has the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system affected youth empowerment and economic self-reliance among Igbo youths?
4. What measures can be adopted to revitalize the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in contemporary Igbo society?

Theoretical framework

Structural Functionalism Theory

Structural Functionalism Theory was originally propounded by Émile Durkheim in the late nineteenth century, particularly around 1895, and was later expanded by Talcott Parsons in the twentieth century. The theory emerged as a sociological approach for

understanding how different parts of society work together to maintain stability, order, and continuity. Durkheim argued that society is like a living organism in which each institution performs specific functions necessary for the survival of the whole society. Parsons later developed the theory further by emphasizing that social institutions such as family, religion, education, economy, and culture are interdependent and contribute to social equilibrium and integration. Structural Functionalism views society as a system made up of interconnected structures that perform essential functions for social stability. According to the theory, every institution within society exists because it contributes positively to the maintenance and survival of the social system. When institutions properly perform their functions, society experiences harmony, order, and continuity. However, when an institution begins to fail or decline in performing its expected roles, social disorder, instability, and dysfunction may arise. The theory therefore explains both social stability and social problems within a society. According to Samuel Chukwudi (2023), Structural Functionalism emphasizes that traditional African institutions historically played important roles in maintaining communal unity, moral discipline, and economic cooperation within indigenous societies. Chukwudi argues that the weakening of such institutions often leads to moral decline and social disorientation among youths. This view supports the

functional relevance of indigenous systems in sustaining African social structures. Similarly, Blessing Adeyemi (2024) explains that the functionalist perspective sees culture and traditional institutions as mechanisms for transmitting societal values from one generation to another. Adeyemi maintains that institutions which fail to adapt to changing social realities gradually lose their effectiveness, thereby creating social imbalance and identity crises within communities. This interpretation further highlights the importance of preserving indigenous institutions in modern African societies. Furthermore, Emmanuel Udeh (2025) observes that indigenous apprenticeship systems in Nigeria served functional purposes beyond economic training by promoting socialization, communal identity, mentorship, and moral upbringing among youths. Udeh notes that the decline of such systems has contributed to unemployment, materialism, and weakening communal relationships in many African communities. This position aligns with the assumptions of Structural Functionalism that institutions are necessary for maintaining social order and continuity.

The relevance of Structural Functionalism Theory to the current study lies in its explanation of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Boi*) as an important socio-cultural and economic institution within Igbo society. The theory helps to explain how *Igba Boi*

traditionally functioned in promoting youth empowerment, cultural transmission, communal solidarity, and moral discipline among the Igbo people. The decline of the institution therefore represents a dysfunction within the social structure, leading to challenges such as moral decadence, unemployment, weakening communal values, and erosion of Igbo identity. Thus, the theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding the socio-cultural implications of the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in contemporary society.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts the descriptive survey research design. The design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to gather information from respondents concerning the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. The design also helps in obtaining opinions, experiences, and perceptions from participants within the study area.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of traders, apprentices, community elders, and youths in selected Igbo communities in southeastern Nigeria. The total

population for the study is estimated at 2,500 persons drawn from major commercial areas and local communities where the apprenticeship system is commonly practiced.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of 350 respondents was selected for the study. The researcher adopted purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who have knowledge of the Igbo apprenticeship system, while simple random sampling ensured equal opportunity for participants within the selected communities.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary source involved the use of structured questionnaires and oral interviews administered to traders, apprentices, and community elders. The secondary source involved textbooks, journal articles, internet materials, and previous scholarly works related to the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system and Igbo socio-cultural identity.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequency tables

and percentages. Responses obtained from interviews were analyzed qualitatively through descriptive interpretation. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods helped the researcher to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the study topic.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This session presents, analyzes, and interprets the data collected for the study titled “*The Decline of Traditional Igbo Apprenticeship System (Igba Boi) and its Socio-Cultural Implications on Igbo Identity.*” A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in selected Igbo communities in southeastern Nigeria. Out of the 350 questionnaires distributed, 330 were correctly completed and returned, representing 94.3% response rate, while 20 questionnaires representing 5.7% were not returned. The analysis is presented according to the research questions guiding the study. Frequency tables and percentages are used for the analysis and interpretation of data.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender Frequency Percentage

Male	210	63.6%
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Gender Frequency Percentage

Female	120	36.4%
Total	330	100%

The table above shows that 210 respondents representing 63.6% were male, while 120 respondents representing 36.4% were female. This indicates that male respondents formed the majority of participants in the study.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
18–25 years	90	27.3%
26–35 years	140	42.4%
36–45 years	60	18.2%
46 years and above	40	12.1%
Total	330	100%

The table reveals that respondents between the ages of 26–35 years constituted the highest percentage with 42.4%, while respondents aged 46 years and above recorded the least percentage with 12.1%.

Table 3: Occupational Status of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Traders	140	42.4%
Apprentices	80	24.2%
Community Elders	40	12.1%
Unemployed Youths	70	21.3%
Total	330	100%

The table above indicates that traders formed the majority of respondents with 42.4%, followed by apprentices with 24.2%, while community elders represented the least percentage with 12.1%.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One:

What are the major factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*)?

Table: Factors Responsible for the Decline of *Igba Bọi*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
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Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Modernization and globalization	90	27.3%
Desire for quick wealth among youths	85	25.8%
Preference for formal education and white-collar jobs	70	21.2%
Economic hardship and lack of trust	50	15.2%
Influence of social media and internet fraud culture	35	10.5%
Total	330	100%

The table above shows that modernization and globalization ranked highest among the factors responsible for the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system with 27.3%. This was followed closely by the desire for quick wealth among youths with 25.8%. The findings indicate that changing social values and modern economic realities have negatively affected the survival of *Igba Bọi* in contemporary Igbo society.

Research Question Two:

What are the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Igba Bọi* on Igbo identity and communal values?

Table: Socio-Cultural Implications of the Decline of *Igba Bọi*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Erosion of Igbo cultural values	100	30.3%
Weakening of communal relationships	75	22.7%
Increase in youth involvement in crime and fraud	80	24.3%
Loss of mentorship and moral discipline	50	15.2%
Decline in indigenous business culture	25	7.5%
Total	330	100%

The table reveals that erosion of Igbo cultural values recorded the highest percentage with 30.3%. This was followed by increase in youth involvement in crime and fraudulent activities with 24.3%. The findings suggest that the decline of the apprenticeship system has

contributed significantly to moral and cultural disorientation among some Igbo youths.

Research Question Three:

How has the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system affected youth empowerment and economic self-reliance among Igbo youths?

Table: Effects of the Decline of Igba Bọj on Youth Empowerment

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Increase in unemployment	110	33.3%
Reduction in entrepreneurial skills acquisition	95	28.8%
Increased dependency among youths	60	18.2%
Increase in poverty and economic frustration	45	13.6%
Decline in indigenous business mentorship	20	6.1%
Total	330	100%

The findings from the table indicate that increase in unemployment ranked highest with 33.3%, while reduction in entrepreneurial skills acquisition followed with 28.8%. This implies that the decline of *Igba Bọi* has negatively affected youth empowerment and economic self-reliance among the Igbo people.

Research Question Four:

What measures can be adopted to revitalize the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in contemporary Igbo society?

Table: Measures for Revitalizing *Igba Bọi*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Cultural re-orientation among youths	95	28.8%
Government support for apprenticeship programs	80	24.2%
Encouraging mentorship and settlement culture	75	22.7%
Integration of apprenticeship into skill acquisition policies	50	15.2%

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Community involvement in preserving Igbo values	30	9.1%
Total	330	100%

The table above shows that cultural re-orientation among youths ranked highest with 28.8%, followed by government support for apprenticeship programs with 24.2%. This suggests that respondents believe that both cultural revival and institutional support are necessary for restoring the traditional apprenticeship system.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that modernization, globalization, and the increasing desire for quick wealth among youths are major factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system. The study discovered that many youths no longer possess the patience and commitment required for apprenticeship training due to changing social values and economic pressures.

The study also revealed that the decline of *Igba Bọi* has serious socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. Important cultural values such as hard work, communalism, loyalty, respect for elders, and mentorship are gradually weakening within

contemporary Igbo society. The findings further indicated that the weakening of the apprenticeship system has contributed to youth unemployment, increase in internet fraud, moral decadence, and reduction in entrepreneurial mentorship among young people.

Furthermore, the study found that revitalizing the traditional apprenticeship system requires cultural re-orientation, government support, community participation, and the restoration of trust between masters and apprentices. The findings support the assumptions of Structural Functionalism Theory which explains that the decline of important social institutions often results in social instability and cultural disintegration.

Summary of Major Findings

The following major findings were made from the study:

1. Modernization, globalization, and the desire for quick wealth are major causes of the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system.
2. The decline of *Igba Boi* has contributed to the erosion of Igbo cultural values and weakening of communal identity.
3. The weakening apprenticeship system has increased unemployment, economic dependency,

and involvement of some youths in fraudulent activities.

4. Cultural re-orientation, mentorship revival, and government support are important measures for revitalizing the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in contemporary society.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for Structural Functionalism Theory. The study confirms the functionalist position that social institutions play important roles in maintaining stability, order, and continuity within society. The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) was found to function not only as an economic institution but also as a means of cultural transmission, youth socialization, moral training, and communal integration in Igbo society.

The study further revealed that the decline of the apprenticeship system has contributed to social dysfunctions such as unemployment, moral decadence, weakening communal relationships, and erosion of Igbo cultural identity. This supports the assumption of Structural Functionalism that when an important social institution fails to perform its expected functions, social instability and disorganization emerge. Therefore, the study strengthens the relevance of Structural Functionalism in explaining the relationship between

indigenous institutions and social stability in contemporary African societies.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications for Igbo society, policy makers, business owners, and youth development agencies. The study revealed that the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) has negatively affected youth empowerment, moral discipline, and cultural continuity. Therefore, community leaders and traditional institutions need to revive and strengthen the apprenticeship culture through mentorship programs and cultural re-orientation initiatives among youths.

The study also implies that government agencies and non-governmental organizations should integrate indigenous apprenticeship models into modern entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programs as a strategy for reducing unemployment and poverty among young people. In addition, business owners and successful entrepreneurs should encourage the traditional settlement culture and mentorship practices that historically promoted economic self-reliance and communal solidarity in Igbo society. The study further emphasizes the need for parents, schools, and religious institutions to promote values such as hard work,

patience, honesty, and communal responsibility among youths.

Conclusion

The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*) has historically served as an important socio-economic and cultural institution among the Igbo people. Beyond business training and economic empowerment, the system played significant roles in youth mentorship, moral upbringing, communal solidarity, and the preservation of Igbo cultural identity. Through the apprenticeship institution, generations of Igbo youths acquired entrepreneurial skills, social values, and indigenous knowledge necessary for self-reliance and community development. However, the study revealed that the system has experienced serious decline in recent times due to modernization, globalization, western influence, economic hardship, and the increasing desire for quick wealth among many youths. The weakening of the apprenticeship system has contributed to unemployment, moral decadence, erosion of communal values, and the gradual loss of important aspects of Igbo identity. The study therefore concludes that the decline of *Igba Bọi* represents not only an economic challenge but also a socio-cultural threat to the continuity of Igbo heritage and communal life. The study further concludes that revitalizing the traditional apprenticeship system through cultural re-orientation, mentorship revival,

community participation, and institutional support will contribute significantly to youth empowerment, cultural preservation, and sustainable socio-economic development in contemporary Igbo society.

Recommendations

1. Igbo community leaders, traditional institutions, and parents should promote cultural re-orientation programs that will encourage youths to embrace the values of hard work, patience, mentorship, and communal responsibility associated with the traditional apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọi*).
2. Government agencies and non-governmental organizations should integrate indigenous apprenticeship systems into modern entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programs in order to reduce youth unemployment and promote economic self-reliance among young people.
3. Business owners and successful entrepreneurs in Igbo society should revive and strengthen the traditional settlement and mentorship culture by training and supporting apprentices in ways that will preserve Igbo cultural identity and sustain indigenous business development.

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