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YOUTH EMIGRATION AND THE IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between youth emigration and the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) in South East Nigeria, focusing on the association between get-rich-quick orientation and IAS-based wealth creation, as well as between formal education and skill development. Anchored on Everett Lee's push-pull theory (1966), the study adopted a survey research design. The population comprised 6,108 respondents drawn from 10 major markets across South East Nigeria. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 375 was selected through multistage sampling. Data were collected via structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, while hypotheses were tested with the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). Findings

indicated a strong significant negative correlation between get-rich-quick syndrome and IAS wealth creation ($r = -0.683$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that higher preference for rapid wealth acquisition is associated with lower engagement in the slow, structured and traditional IAS wealth-creation pathway. Formal education showed a significant positive correlation with skill development ($r = 0.511$, $p < 0.001$). The study concludes that both internal and external factors are exerting push-pull pressures threatening the participation of youths in the IAS. It recommends a value-driven orientation campaign by key stakeholders and strategic adjustments within the IAS to strengthen confidence in the system.

Keywords: Igbo Apprenticeship System, Get-rich quick syndrome, Wealth Creation, youth Emigration, Formal Education, Skills Development

Introduction

In recent years, the decline of the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) has raised concerns due to the increasing materialism affecting its cultural and economic significance (Okeke, 2023). Historically rooted in African tradition, apprenticeship was a method for young individuals to learn from experienced masters within family structures (Nnonyelu, Nnabuife, Onyeizugbe, Anazodo, Onyima, 2023). With European influence, this system evolved, gaining formal recognition in Nigeria in 1986 through the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment to combat unemployment (Newo, Oladipo, Ayankoya and Olanrewaju, 2023). The Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) became synonymous with entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, fostering skills development, mentorship, and cultural preservation, especially following the devastation of the Civil War, which necessitated a return to cultural values and community support (Godson, 2024).

However, the rise of a "get-rich-quick" mentality and the emigration of Igbo youth have strained the IAS's effectiveness. Settlement practices, where masters provide apprentices with capital upon training completion, became critical in maintaining trust, yet failures in this area have led to disillusionment (Okeke, 2023). The IAS reflects the resilience of the Igbo people and their commitment to cultural identity, yet emerging challenges in the

contemporary economic landscape highlight a tension between traditional apprenticeship and modern aspirations (Osuagwu, 2024). As the region grapples with these dynamics, the IAS remains a vital means of community cohesion and a pathway for individual success amidst changing societal values.

Youth emigration from South-East Nigeria is creating serious socio-economic challenges for the region. Driven by perceived economic instability, insecurity, and the search for better opportunities, many young people are leaving in quest for quick wealth, resulting in significant loss of human capital. This trend threatens small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that depend on skilled local labour. Historically, the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) promoted practical skills, self-reliance, and wealth creation. However, the system has weakened due to the attraction to quick-wealth pathways, inconsistent settlement practices, and insecurity. If unaddressed, the region risks further decline in indigenous entrepreneurship and continued youth outmigration.

Despite the IAS's potential to reduce youth emigration through skill development and enterprise formation, its effectiveness remains insufficiently examined. Many youths perceive limited opportunities within the system, while declining trust in master–apprentice relationships undermine its credibility. Previous studies have identified drivers of youth emigration but rarely examined their interaction with the IAS. Furthermore, most relied on qualitative methods or descriptive statistics, with limited use of correlation analysis to test variable relationships. This methodological and conceptual gap necessitates the present study which investigates the relationship between youth emigration and the IAS.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study will be to determine the relationship between Youth Emigration and the Igbo Apprenticeship System in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, to:

1. ascertain the relationship that exist between the get-rich-quick syndrome and wealth creation in South-East Nigeria.
2. examine the relationship that exist between formal education and skill development in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is the relationship between get-rich quick syndrome and wealth creation in South-East Nigeria?
2. To what degree is the relationship between formal education and skill development in South-East Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were used to test the variables:

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between the get-rich quick syndrome and wealth creation in South-East Nigeria.

HO_2: There is no significant relationship between the desire for formal education and skills development South-East Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Igbo Apprenticeship System

The Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS), also known as "Igba-boi," is a vital framework for skill acquisition and entrepreneurship among the Igbo people of Nigeria. Scholars highlight its role in fostering self-reliance through mentor-apprentice relationships that impart vocational skills and moral values (Olabisi & Adesola, 2025). The IAS has significantly contributed to economic mobility and wealth creation, underscoring its importance in shaping the socio-economic landscape of the Igbo community. After the Nigerian-Biafran

war, the IAS emerged as a crucial mechanism for economic recovery, facilitating the rebuilding of commercial hubs and contributing to poverty reduction and overall economic development in Nigeria (Adelekun, 2023).

Culturally, the IAS is rooted in the principle of **"Onyeaghalanwanneya,"** which emphasizes communal support and the responsibility of successful individuals to uplift others (Idemobi, Okafor, Dike & Anyika, 2024). The mentorship dynamic between masters and apprentices, typically lasting four to seven years, culminates in the provision of resources to start businesses. Despite its benefits, the IAS faces challenges, including modern business demands, sustainability issues, and materialism among youth. Recent analyses call for modernization through integration with formal education and digital technologies, along with policy support and gender inclusivity, to enhance the IAS's relevance in the 21st-century economy (Antai, Okpong, Jufri , Imiefoh, Collins & Aidonojie, 2024).

2.1.1.1 Wealth Creation

Wealth creation involves strategically growing financial resources to achieve long-term security, encompassing disciplined saving, wise investing, and effective management (Udoh & Akpan, 2024). The Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS), rooted in the principle of "onyeaghalanwanneya" ("do not leave your brother behind"), plays a pivotal role in fostering community wealth through skill acquisition and entrepreneurship (Omeire, 2025). This system ensures apprentices gain essential trade skills, practical experience, and a strong work ethic under the mentorship of experienced masters. The IAS emphasizes comprehensive training, which includes technical proficiency and ethical conduct, ultimately preparing graduates to launch sustainable businesses (Antai et al., 2024). A defining feature is the master's responsibility to provide financial capital, or "locally generated venture capital," to apprentices upon graduation, facilitating their ventures and

addressing barriers to entrepreneurship (Irene, Onoshakpor, Lockyer, Chukwuma-Nwuba & Ndeh, 2024).

Moreover, the IAS cultivates robust network effects and business relationships that enhance wealth generation (Omede & Nte, 2023). Mentors often share their customer bases with former apprentices, providing immediate market access and fostering a collaborative economic environment. This system is recognized as a major incubator for businesses, with mentorship cycles ensuring sustained positive impacts on local economies (Omede & Nte, 2023). The IAS promotes social mobility, reducing poverty and income inequality while allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to achieve economic independence (Akaenyi, 2024). Its adaptability to changing economic landscapes, including modern professions and practices, reinforces its relevance as a model for wealth creation within the Igbo community and beyond, highlighting the enduring legacy of mentorship and community success.

Skill Development

Skills development involves acquiring abilities to enhance performance in various tasks, playing a vital role in employability and personal growth (Thapa, 2024). The Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) serves as a crucial framework for vocational training, emphasizing on-the-job training under experienced practitioners (Irene et al., 2024). This hands-on approach allows apprentices to gain practical skills and theoretical knowledge, shaped by social learning theory where they observe and imitate their masters. The dynamic teacher-apprentice relationship fosters an immersive learning environment, promoting not just technical skills but also entrepreneurial acumen, business operations, and essential values such as integrity and diligence. This system typically spans three to seven years, culminating in a “settlement” phase where apprentices receive resources to establish their own ventures (Ejiofor & Otika, 2024).

The IAS cultivates a diverse range of skills, preparing individuals for various trades and modern enterprises in Igbo society. The skills imparted go beyond technical proficiency, encompassing essential managerial and interpersonal abilities critical for entrepreneurial success (Ohazuruike & Elechi, 2023). This comprehensive skill development not only supports economic growth and self-reliance but also promotes social mobility, enabling individuals to achieve economic independence. While the IAS contrasts with formal vocational training by emphasizing practical learning, challenges persist in aligning its traditional practices with modern business dynamics. Overall, the IAS significantly impacts poverty reduction and the entrepreneurial spirit within the Igbo community, enhancing its resilience and economic landscape (Nwagu, 2023).

Youth Emigration

Youth emigration involves young individuals, typically aged 15 to 30, moving to other countries in search of better educational, economic, or social opportunities (Doumas & Avery, 2024). In South-East Nigeria, this trend is primarily driven by economic hardship, high unemployment, and limited access to quality education (Ebimgbo, Chukwu & Okoye, 2022). Many youths migrate from rural areas to urban centers, which strains urban infrastructure while depleting rural labour resources, particularly in agriculture. This exodus can weaken family structures and contribute to urban slum growth (Egwuagu & Anikeze, 2024). The increasing rates of youth emigration pose significant challenges to the Igbo apprenticeship system, which traditionally aimed to equip youths with skills for local entrepreneurship.

Research indicates that the motivations for youth emigration among the Igbo are closely linked to socioeconomic factors like unemployment and political instability. As more youths seek opportunities abroad, the Igbo apprenticeship system faces a dual challenge: a dwindling pool of apprentices and a concerning brain drain (Dzreke, 2025). This situation

highlights the urgent need for policy interventions to revitalize the apprenticeship system, ensuring it remains relevant and effective in preparing youths for the local labour market.

Get-rich Quick Syndrome

The "get-rich-quick syndrome" has become a pervasive mindset among young people, particularly within the Igbo community, fuelling a wave of emigration as individuals seek rapid wealth and prosperity beyond their borders. This phenomenon entails the belief that substantial wealth can be achieved quickly with minimal effort, often leading individuals to engage in risky ventures, dubious investment schemes, or lotteries (Okunima & Ikenyei, 2025). Such pursuits frequently result in financial losses and disillusionment, highlighting the unsustainable nature of these quick-fix approaches. In contrast, the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) emphasizes patience, skill acquisition, and gradual wealth building, cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit while reinforcing cultural values and heritage (Osuagwu, 2024). This age-old system serves as a reminder that true financial success is a journey rather than an instant achievement.

As youth emigration from South-East Nigeria rises, the desire for quick wealth accumulation significantly influences the youth's aspirations, making traditional paths like the IAS less appealing. Factors including globalization, social media exposure, and peer pressure exacerbate this trend, compelling young individuals to chase rapid financial success to gain social recognition and meet economic demands (Akaenyi, 2024). Social media often showcases images of affluence, creating a sense of deprivation among those unable to attain similar wealth through conventional means (Yan, Fu, Yang & Han, 2025). This pressure, combined with the urgency to provide for families, intensifies the allure of immediate wealth, further challenging the viability and attractiveness of the IAS as a long-term solution for economic empowerment.

Formal education

Formal education represents structured learning within institutions like schools and universities, emphasizing academic growth, critical thinking, and skill development (Simbo, 2025). As young individuals, particularly in the Igbo community, face pressures from the "get-rich-quick syndrome," many question the value of this traditional route, perceiving it as a lengthy path to success. Despite these pressures, formal education remains essential for developing skills necessary for long-term success and impactful lives. Concurrently, the pursuit of education serves as a significant motivation for youth emigration, with many seeking improved living standards, safety, and political freedom associated with educational opportunities abroad (Mahato, Paudel & Baral, 2022). Socioeconomic constraints and frustrations with Nigeria's higher education system drive students to countries like South Africa for better quality education.

Ohazuruike & Elechi, (2023) posit that the Igbo Apprenticeship System serves as an alternative pathway for youth empowerment and economic growth in South-East Nigeria through mentorship and skill acquisition. However, challenges such as its informal nature and rising materialism among youth diminish its appeal compared to formal education. Many perceive the apprenticeship as a fallback option for the less academically inclined, heightening interest in formal qualifications, particularly among those aspiring for professional careers. The inclination to emigrate is pronounced among Nigerian youth, driven by economic opportunities, underscoring the need for educational avenues that enhance skills and employment prospects both locally and abroad (Oguejiofor & Onwuasoigwe, 2024). The success of educated Nigerian migrants further underscores the connection between education and migration, emphasizing the importance of adapting traditional systems to modern economic demands.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes the Push-Pull Migration Theory, developed by Everett Lee in 1966, as a framework to examine the dynamics of youth emigration and the Igbo Apprenticeship

System (IAS) in South-East Nigeria. The theory explores migration influenced by negative push factors—such as insecurity, limited economic opportunities, and inadequate educational infrastructure—that drive individuals away from their communities. Conversely, positive pull factors, including the allure of wealth, quality education, and appealing lifestyles portrayed on social media, attract youth to foreign destinations. This duality allows for a comprehensive analysis of the complex motivations behind emigration, as well as their interaction with the traditional structures represented by the IAS.

The Push-Pull Theory's relevance extends to understanding the relationship between established socioeconomic systems, like the IAS, and the aspirations of contemporary youth. It highlights the tensions between traditional wealth creation methods and the desire for rapid financial gain, as well as the contrasts between formal education and practical skill development. The theory's framework can also illuminate how the IAS might act as a mediating institution, either facilitating local opportunities or struggling against external migration impulses. By accommodating both economic and non-economic factors influencing migration, this theoretical approach supports the study's goal of devising evidence-based strategies to leverage indigenous systems for alleviating emigration trends, ensuring that policy interventions address the material and psychological factors influencing youth migration in South-East Nigeria.

Empirical Studies

Bala and Nyaga (2024) evaluated the effect of Igbo apprenticeship practices on business startups among Jos South Building Materials members in Plateau State, Nigeria. They employed a survey design with a population of 214 shop owners and craftsmen, determining a sample size of 199, with 144 completed questionnaires analyzed. Using a five-point Likert scale and statistical methods, findings revealed significant positive correlations between apprenticeship mentoring and skills acquisition with business startups. Regression analysis confirmed that both mentoring and skills acquisition

significantly influenced entrepreneurship. The researchers concluded that Igbo apprenticeship practices effectively promote business startups despite Nigeria's challenging economic conditions.

Nwokolobia, Ikenga, and Sanubi (2024) examined the drivers and trends of irregular migration, specifically the push and pull factors behind the "Japa syndrome" in Nigeria. Using a historical research design and trend analysis, they found that the pursuit of better opportunities abroad is driven by chronic unemployment, inadequate safety, and limited income prospects. Economic opportunism aimed at improving living standards and family welfare significantly contextualizes this irregular migration. The study noted a marked increase in the migration rate since 2019 and concluded that these pressures have led many industrious Nigerian youths to emigrate, underscoring the need for economic improvements and enhanced security in Nigeria.

Onu, Anoruoh, Ukono, and Agu (2023) studied the Igbo apprenticeship system and its sustainability in South-East Nigeria. Utilizing a survey design and snowball sampling, they selected 325 graduate entrepreneurs across the five capital cities. Data were presented using tables and percentages, and hypotheses were tested with Multiple Regression Analysis via SPSS. The study highlighted the historical significance of the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS), tracing its roots to the colonial era when Igbo traders excelled. The IAS has since evolved into a robust business incubation model, significantly impacting the economic, social, and environmental development of the region. The researchers concluded that the IAS is an effective indigenous business model with proven sustainability.

Okunade and Awosusi (2023) explored the "Japa syndrome" and Nigerian migration to the United Kingdom through empirical analysis. Using a qualitative design, they conducted e-interviews with 36 Nigerian university students across 17 UK institutions. Findings indicated that while Nigeria's poor economic conditions and security issues drive migration, the UK's neo-liberal policies and global trends also play a crucial role. The study identified strong pull factors, such as the UK's immigration policies, educational

opportunities, and perceived better living standards. In contrast, push factors included high unemployment and political instability in Nigeria. The researchers concluded that these local and international factors create complex migration patterns, leading to potential brain drain for Nigeria and challenges in integrating the Nigerian diaspora in the UK.

Okeke (2023) investigated the impact of materialism on the Igbo Apprenticeship System, focusing on the get-rich-quick mentality through selected Igbo literary works, including "A na-agwa ntị" and "Ije Ego." Using a qualitative research method and the framework of cultural materialism, the study analyzed how economic factors shape culture and social behavior. Findings indicated that the pursuit of material wealth has led to a decline in the apprenticeship system, as young people increasingly prioritize quick wealth over traditional values like communalism and mentorship. Okeke concluded that preserving Igbo cultural practices, particularly the apprenticeship model, necessitates rejecting consumerism and promoting communal values of sharing and mentorship.

Nganwuchu and Afunugo (2023) examined the religio-ethical implications of mass migration among Igbo youth from Nigeria, focusing on the challenges and lessons from this phenomenon. Utilizing a survey research design, they collected data through questionnaires and interviews analyzed via probability sampling. Findings highlighted several factors driving this migration, including human rights violations like child marriage, sexual exploitation of women, violence, and unpaid labor. The study confirmed that Igbo youth migration is a significant reality, with respondents acknowledging it as a strategy for economic emancipation, allowing young individuals to establish themselves and support family members in urban areas.

Alabi and Olajide (2023) explored regional variations in emigration intentions in Nigeria, focusing on who intends to migrate and to which destinations. Utilizing secondary data from the Afrobarometer survey, which included 1,600 adults aged 18 and above, they applied logistic regression models for analysis. Results indicated a national emigration intention rate of 35.5%, with significant regional differences: 30.3% in the north and 40.3%

in the south, ranging from 26% in the north-east to 46.4% in the south-east. The preferred destinations varied, with northern Nigerians favoring Africa, while southerners preferred North America. The study identified factors influencing emigration intentions, emphasizing the need for targeted migration policies that consider these regional differences.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design to examine the relationship between youth emigration and the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) in South-East Nigeria. The target population comprised 6,108 registered masters and apprentices operating in ten major markets in the region. A multistage sampling procedure was employed: stage one applied stratified sampling to select the five states in Southeast Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo) which were treated as distinct strata, ensuring representation from each state. Stage two involved purposive selection of the ten commercially active markets; and stage three used simple random sampling to select individual participants. Using Taro Yamane's formula ($n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$) at a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 375 was determined. Questionnaires were distributed to all 375 respondents, with 319 valid returns (85.1% response rate). Instrument validity was established through expert review, and reliability confirmed via Cronbach's alpha. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) in SPSS Version 25 at the 0.05 significance level, with ethical standards observed.

Analysis of Data Related to Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between get-rich-quick syndrome and wealth creation?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Responses on the relationship between Get-Rich-Quick Syndrome and Wealth Creation

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
Get-rich Quick Syndrome					
1	I think that the prevalence of get-rich-quick schemes negatively impacts the reputation of traditional apprenticeship programs.	319	4.11	0.992	Accepted
2	I think that get-rich-quick schemes are a common temptation for youth considering emigration.	319	4.34	0.881	Accepted
3	I feel that the desire for quick wealth often distracts young people from pursuing traditional career paths.	319	4.28	0.943	Accepted
4	I believe that the allure of quick money leads to increased risk-taking among youth.	319	4.07	1.011	Accepted
Wealth Creation					
5	I believe that participating in the Igbo Apprenticeship System is crucial for building sustainable wealth.	319	4.51	0.764	Accepted
6	I feel that the skills acquired through the Igbo Apprenticeship System provide better opportunities for financial success than quick schemes.	319	3.98	1.103	Accepted
7	I think investing in local businesses through apprenticeship programs can enhance community wealth.	319	4.19	0.913	Accepted

8	I feel that wealth creation through traditional means is more beneficial for our community than seeking quick riches.	319	4.33	0.852	Accepted
Grand Mean		**319**	**4.23**	**0.932**	**Accepted**

Source: *Researcher's Computation using SPSS, 2025*

The analysis in Table 1, with a grand mean of 4.23, shows a strong acceptance of the items concerning the get-rich-quick syndrome and wealth creation. All eight items were accepted, with mean scores significantly above the 3.0 threshold. Within the 'Get-rich Quick Syndrome' construct, the highest acceptance was for Item 2 (M = 4.34), followed by Item 3 (M = 4.28). For the 'Wealth Creation' construct, Item 5 had the highest mean score (M = 4.51), indicating an overwhelming agreement, followed by Item 8 (M = 4.33). The lowest mean score was for Item 6 (M = 3.98), which was still well within the accepted range. This indicates a strong consensus that the get-rich-quick mentality negatively impacts traditional paths to success, while the IAS is seen as a vital mechanism for sustainable wealth creation.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between formal education and skill development?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Responses on the relationship between Formal Education and Skill Development

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
Formal Education					
9	I believe that formal education is essential for achieving long-term financial success.	319	3.89	1.054	Accepted
10	I think that formal education should be prioritized over quick wealth schemes for sustainable success.	319	4.03	0.987	Accepted

11	I feel that many young people in my community undervalue the importance of formal education in wealth creation.	319	2.76	1.151	Rejected
12	I feel that the lack of access to quality education limits the financial potential of young people in my community.	319	3.55	1.203	Accepted
Skill Development					
13	I feel that the Igbo Apprenticeship System effectively enhances skill development among youth.	319	4.41	0.812	Accepted
14	I believe that hands-on experience gained through skill development is crucial for long-term career success.	319	4.53	0.778	Accepted
15	I feel that investing in skill development can lead to more entrepreneurial opportunities for youth.	319	4.37	0.844	Accepted
16	I think that skill development programs can prepare young people better for the job market than traditional education.	319	2.81	1.117	Rejected
Grand Mean		**319**	**3.79**	**0.993**	**Accepted**

Source: *Researcher's Computation using SPSS, 2025*

Table 2 presents a nuanced view on formal education and skill development, with an overall accepted grand mean of 3.79. While most items were accepted, two were rejected. Item 11 (M = 2.76) and Item 16 (M = 2.81) both fell below the 3.0 threshold, indicating disagreement from the respondents. The highest acceptance was for Item 14 (M = 4.53), followed closely by Item 13 (M = 4.41), showing significant belief in the power of hands-

on experience and the effectiveness of the IAS in skill development. The rejection of specific items suggests that respondents do not see skill development and formal education as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary paths to success.

Hypotheses Testing

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis if $p \leq 0.05$, indicating a statistically significant relationship. The r value determines the strength of the relationship.

Hypothesis 1

H_{O1}: There is no significant relationship between the get-rich-quick syndrome and wealth creation in South-East Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlation between Get-rich Quick Syndrome and Wealth Creation

		Get-rich Quick Syndrome	**Wealth Creation**
Get-rich Quick Syndrome	Pearson Correlation	1	-.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	319	319
Wealth Creation	Pearson Correlation	-.683**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	319	319

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Researcher's Computation using SPSS, 2025*

The Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to test the relationship between the get-rich-quick syndrome and wealth creation. The results show a strong, negative, and statistically significant correlation between the two variables ($r = -.683$, $N = 319$, $p = .000$). Since the p-value (.000) is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is

rejected. This indicates that as the prevalence of the get-rich-quick syndrome increases, the perceived value of traditional wealth creation through systems like the IAS decreases.

Hypothesis 2

H_{O2}: There is no significant relationship between the desire for formal education and skills development in South-East Nigeria.

Table 4: Correlation between Formal Education and Skill Development

		Formal Education	Skill Development
Formal Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.511**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	319	319
Skill Development	Pearson Correlation	.511**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	319	319

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Researcher's Computation using SPSS, 2025*

The analysis reveals a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between formal education and skill development ($r = .511$, $N = 319$, $p = .000$). The p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that respondents who value formal education also tend to value skill development, viewing them as complementary rather than competing pathways for success.

Discussion of Finding

he first hypothesis reveals a significant negative relationship between the get-rich-quick syndrome and wealth creation, consistent with the Push-Pull Migration Theory. Negative conditions in a home country act as "push" factors for emigration, as the allure of quick wealth undermines traditional models like the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS). Societal pressure for immediate financial success compromises the patience needed for apprenticeships, pushing youths toward perceived quicker routes to prosperity, including emigration. Okeke (2023) notes that materialism has diminished the IAS, with youth prioritizing fast wealth over communal values. Nganwuchu and Afunugo (2023) identify economic emancipation as a primary driver of migration, aided by the get-rich-quick

mentality. Nwokolobia, Ikenga, and Sanubi (2024) highlight how economic opportunism shapes irregular migration, conflicting with the IAS model (Onu et al., 2023).

The study also finds a significant positive relationship between the desire for formal education and skill development. While formal education is valued, aspirations for higher-quality education abroad act as a "pull" factor for emigration. Many see education and skill development as complementary rather than oppositional. Alabi and Olajide (2023) confirm that education increases emigration intentions in the South-East, while Okunade and Awosusi (2023) indicate that UK educational opportunities attract Nigerian migrants. The emphasis on skill development aligns with Bala and Nyaga (2024), who found that apprenticeship correlates with business startups and unemployment reduction. Unfortunately, the stronger allure of foreign education often results in brain drain.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

i. A significant negative correlation ($r = -0.683$, $p < .001$) exists between the get-rich-quick syndrome and wealth creation, implying that the allure of instant wealth erodes the value placed on traditional, patient entrepreneurship.
ii. A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.511$, $p < .001$) was found between the desire for formal education and skill development, which implies that youths see both as complementary, but the pull of superior foreign education often fuels emigration.

Conclusion

The Igbo Apprenticeship System, a once-unrivaled engine of indigenous entrepreneurship in the South-East, is at a critical crossroads, bleeding its most valuable asset—its youth—to emigration. This study concludes that the IAS is being systematically weakened by a confluence of internal decay and external pressures that create powerful push-and-pull dynamics. Internal failures, most notably the breach of trust caused by masters failing to

settle their apprentices, are eroding the system from within, while external forces such as pervasive insecurity, the siren call of the get-rich-quick syndrome, and the idealized narratives on social media are pulling talent away. The result is a hollowing out of a vital socio-economic institution, leaving a vacuum that, if left unaddressed, will have profound consequences for the economic future and cultural identity of the South-East region.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed

1. Community and Religious Leaders need to launch and sustain value re-orientation campaigns and educational programmes to counter the get-rich-quick mentality by emphasizing the virtues of hard work, patience, and integrity that are the hallmarks of the traditional apprenticeship system and also highlighting successful local entrepreneurs who have built their wealth over time.
2. Educational Institutions need to collaborate with Industry leaders with a view to create hybrid educational models that integrate the practical, hands-on training of the IAS with formal education and digital skills education to make local skill acquisition more appealing. Also, partnerships between local educational institutions and foreign universities should be created to provide students with opportunities for quality education without needing to emigrate. Scholarships and exchange programs can be beneficial.

Contribution to Knowledge

This work significantly contributes to understanding the dynamics between youth emigration and traditional apprenticeship in the Igbo community. It explores critical factors such as the get-rich-quick syndrome, desire for formal education, and the influence of social media, revealing how these elements motivate youth to leave their communities and affect local economies. The study underscores the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) as

crucial for wealth creation, skill development, and cultural preservation, while employing Pearson correlation analysis to provide empirical evidence of significant relationships between these variables.

The findings have important implications for policymakers and community leaders, offering actionable strategies to enhance the IAS and mitigate youth emigration. By applying the Push-Pull Migration Theory, the research enriches discussions on migration and indigenous entrepreneurship, while also identifying gaps for future research, such as the need for longitudinal studies on apprentices' career trajectories and the evolving role of women within the IAS.

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