

A Qualitative Exploration of Gender Bias within the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS)

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ABSTRACT

Formal education is popular and taken seriously by parents (Agozino & Anyanike, 2007). However, there is also a strong desire among the Igbos to ensure that their male children learn one form of trade or another hence the interest in the Igbo apprenticeship system (IAS). The main emphasis of the system is to reduce poverty through the aggregation of enhanced opportunities for all, given their beliefs that every child belongs to the local communities and the communities make sure that the children are successful and prosper (Ekekwe, 2021). This system of apprenticeship has been long-standing practice whereby poor parents send their children/wards to live with wealthy or successful traders/businessmen and the wealthy entrepreneurs train the children in the rudiments of their business or profession (Agozino & Anyanike, 2007). In some circumstances, wealthy entrepreneurs during some of their trips to their villages or towns, pick some orphaned children (typically boys) of children from indigent families to train to give them meaningful lives. Generally, the aim of and the belief in the IAS is that the wards/children would be trained in the business (es) of the entrepreneurs and invariably the wards/children will be established in similar businesses at the end of the time agreed on at the start of the process. In addition, the masters also extend credit facilities to their graduates.

Keywords: Apprenticeship, Gender Bias, Igbo Apprenticeship System, Feminist Intersectionality Theory, constructivism