BUSINESS RELATED INSTRUCTIONS AND PROFIT OUTCOME OF IGBO TRADERS IN THE BUILDING MATERIALS MARKET

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Abstract

The study assessed the relationship between business related instructions and profit outcome of Igbo traders in the building materials market within Lagos and Ogun States, specifically targeting Alaba Suru market in Lagos and Ota market in Ogun state, Nigeria. It adopts cross-sectional survey research design, data were collected from 210 respondents using structured questionnaire, data generated from the respondents were analysed using the SmartPLS. The study showed a strong positive relationship between business related instructions and profit outcome of Igbo traders; the study therefore recommends that traders should prioritize business related instructional practices in their business operations to increase their profit outcomes.

Keywords: Apprentice, Building Materials, Igbo, Profit Outcome, Related Instructions, Trader

1. Introduction

Business related instructions are essential elements of the Igbo apprenticeship system which are often used as a means of training the apprentice.

According to Daurio (2020), related instruction is a basic tool in apprenticeship programs. Strauss (1968) in his study stated that related instructions is instrumental to the training in apprenticeship programs. Lippolis (2025) also affirmed that related instruction is a critical component of apprenticeship which helps the apprentices to acquire the skills they need to be successful in any occupation in the future.

The indigenous business instructions framework of the Igbo business model of apprenticeship provides years of tutelage to young men and women under a master craft man or "Oga" under this model, related business instruction has indeed offered the apprentices an opportunity to acquire business acumen, healthy work attitude, market dynamics and discipline, deal with suppliers and customers, and interaction with other practitioners. (Okwuowulu, 2022).

Profit outcome cannot be separated from the success of any business not only in Nigeria but also across the world, and even more pronounced among the Igbo traders in Nigeria. Interestingly, related instructions can be viewed or believed as one of the key elements that contribute to the profit outcome of the Igbo traders in Nigeria. This concept or phenomenon has played a significant role in promoting Igbo traders. Despite of geopolitical biases, the Igbos share similar cultural practices and patterns, which are based on similar cults and

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socio-cultural institutions (Agama & Ohajionu, 2021). According to Kennedy and Elechi (2023), the Igbo people among many other things are persevering, enterprising wherever they in a business activity and successful.

Finally, Ndi Igbo are people that are industrious, enterprising, successful, resilient and above all human investors and nation builders (Iloanya & Nwanegbo-Ben, 2021). It is observed that many of these so-called Igbo apprentices achieve excellence in their calling because of related instructions from their "Oga" apart from being trained and settled well by their master (Kennedy & Elechi (2023).

There appears to be a paucity of academic literature attempting to link related instructions with profit outcome particularly among the Igbo traders in Nigeria. This study attempts to examine how business-related instructions affect the profit outcome of Igbo traders in the building materials market.

2. Literature Review

Linking related instructions and profit outcome

Generally, related instruction forms a crucial component of the apprenticeship process among Igbo traders. It entails shop-based learning, practical hands-on training, where apprentices acquire theoretical knowledge and technical skills relevant to their trade (Adim & Amadi, 2020). For instance, in the context of Igbo apprenticeship, related instruction may involve learning about market dynamics, customer relations, and financial management to prepare apprentices for entrepreneurship (Ifeanyi, et al.; 2020). This blend of theoretical and practical education equips apprentices with a holistic understanding of their craft and the business landscape (Ifechukwu-Jacobs, 2022). Related instruction in Igbo apprenticeship serves as a vital bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, enabling apprentices to gain a comprehensive understanding of their trade and its broader context. By incorporating shop-based learning, hands-on practices, apprentices not only acquire technical skills but also develop critical thinking abilities and problem-solving skills necessary for entrepreneurship (Ifeanyi et al., 2020). This structured educational component not only enhances the quality of apprenticeship but also prepares individuals for diverse career pathways beyond traditional trades. However, challenges may arise in ensuring the relevance and adaptability of related instruction to evolving market demands and technological advancements, highlighting the need for ongoing curriculum updates and industry collaboration (Adim & Amadi, 2020).

Furthermore, the Experiential Learning Theory, developed by Kolb (1984) also support related instructions during apprenticeship. The theory posits that learning is a continuous process that occurs through experiences. Kolb's theory sets out a four-stage learning model: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the context of the apprenticeship and entrepreneurial performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) among Igbo traders, the Experiential Learning Theory holds significant relevance. Apprenticeship, which involves hands-on learning and practical experience under the guidance of a mentor, aligns closely with Kolb's concept of concrete experience. Apprentices engage directly with the business environment, gaining practical skills and insights into entrepreneurial practices (Nwanna & Osakwe, 2021).

Furthermore, the reflective observation stage of Kolb's learning cycle corresponds to the period when apprentices reflect on their experiences and observations in the workplace. They analyze their actions, outcomes, and the strategies employed by successful entrepreneurs, thereby enhancing their understanding of business operations (Ifeanyi, et al. 2020). However, some criticisms and challenges exist regarding the Experiential Learning Theory. Critics argue that Kolb's model may have oversimplified the learning process by focusing primarily on individual experiences and neglecting the influence of social and environmental factors (Nasir et al., 2018). In the context of Igbo traders in Nigeria, where social networks and community dynamics play a crucial role in entrepreneurship, this critique highlights the limitations of an individual-centric approach to learning.

Moreover, while the Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization, its application may encounter challenges in environments where access to formal education and theoretical frameworks is limited (Ezekafor, et al. 2023). In regions with inadequate educational infrastructure, such as rural areas in Nigeria, apprentices may face barriers in transitioning from practical experiences to abstract conceptualization and theoretical understanding. By implications, the Experiential Learning Theory offers valuable insights for enhancing apprenticeship programs and entrepreneurial performance among Igbo traders. By incorporating reflection and conceptualization into apprenticeship curriculum, stakeholders can promote deeper learning and critical thinking skills among apprentices (Okpokwasili & Onwuatuegwu, 2024). Additionally, recognizing the importance of experiential learning can inform the design of training interventions and capacity-building initiatives tailored to the needs of SMEs. The Experiential Learning Theory presents a robust framework for understanding how individuals acquire knowledge and skills through hands-on experiences (Kolb, 1984). One of its key strengths lies in its emphasis on the active engagement of learners in real-world tasks and reflection on their experiences, fostering deep understanding and practical application of concepts (Kolb, 1984). In the context of apprenticeship and entrepreneurial performance among Igbo traders, the Experiential Learning Theory offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of hands-on training and experiential learning activities in cultivating entrepreneurial competencies and business acumen (Uju, et al. 2022). However, the theory's primary weakness lies in its limited consideration of socio-cultural factors and the role of social interactions in shaping learning experiences and outcomes. The Social Learning Theory, posits that individuals learn by observing and imitating the behaviors of others within their social environment. This theory complements the Experiential Learning Theory by highlighting the importance of social dynamics, role modeling in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors among Igbo traders in Nigeria's dynamic business landscape.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design using structured survey questionnaire.

The population for the study includes all the Igbo traders in the building materials market in Lagos and Ogun States, specifically targeting Alaba Suru in Lagos and Ota in Ogun state, owing to their status as economic hubs with the highest demand for building and construction resources (Oyalowo, 2022). The study employed cluster sampling approach, to select 230 respondents after a sample determination exercise via Cochran's Formula (1977). A primary source of data was utilized through structured survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed and retrieved through drop-off pick procedure, however, only 210 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. The collected questionnaire were analysed using both descriptive and regression analysis techniques.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The data analysed in this study considered the prediction of both structural and measurement models. Following the recommendations of Bollen & Stine (1992) and Liao, et al. (2022). All the constructs and items in the measurement model had loading factors not lower than 0.70. All the constructs had values above 0.70. The findings, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, showed that only few items with loading factors less than 0.7 were removed. Significant values, R-squared (R^2), and path coefficients were assessed by using SMART-PLS and the bootstrapping estimate.

H_{01}: There exists no significant relationship between business related instructions and profit outcome of Igbo traders in the building materials market

The hypothesis consists of one independent variable (business related instructions for apprentice) and one dependent variable (profit outcome of Igbo traders in the building materials market) in Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria. All variables in the study were analysed using a standardized questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale. The variables were measured using six (6) items. PLS-SEM is commonly used for predicting the relationship between variables (Hair, 2021). Figure 1, illustrates the standardized estimates that indicate the relationship between related instructions for apprentice and profit outcome of Igbo traders in the building materials market [BMM].

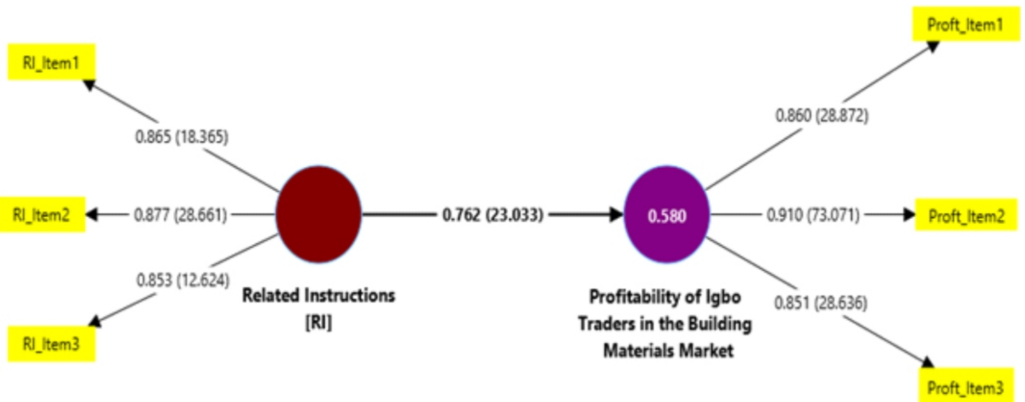

Figure 1 Predictive relevance (Path co-efficient and T-values) of business related instructions and profit outcome of Igbo Traders in the Building Materials Market

It is important to note that all the items related to related instructions for apprentice and profit outcome of Igbo traders, as shown in Table 1, showed a factor loading greater than the threshold of 0.70 as suggested by Thakkar (2020). This indicates a strong and positive relationship between the variables.

Table 1 Loading for Business Related Instructions and Profit Outcome of Igbo Traders

	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Indicators
Indicators	. . . ,	**≥ 0.8**	**≥ 0.5**	**≥ 0.7**	
RELATED INSTRUCTIONS	0.831	0.838	0.628	0.828	3
PROFIT OF IGBO TRADERS	0.827	0.890	0.683	0.846	3

Discriminant validity

The Fornell-Larcker criterion results demonstrate that discriminant validity is effectively established among the constructs of related instructions for apprentice and profit outcome of Igbo traders, as indicated by the square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct being greater than the correlations between them. Specifically, the square root of the AVE for related instructions for apprentice is 0.864, while for profit outcome, it is 0.880, both of which exceed the correlation values, confirming that these constructs are distinct from one another. This distinction is crucial for the study as it ensures that the constructs are measuring different underlying concepts, thereby reducing the risk of multicollinearity and enhancing the robustness of the model. For Igbo traders in the building materials industry, this finding implies that focusing on related instructions for apprentice can lead to improved profit outcome without conflating the effects of different operational strategies, thereby allowing traders to implement targeted interventions that can enhance their business performance effectively.

Table 2 Discriminant Validity – Fornell Larcker Criterion

Discriminant	Related Instructions	Profit Outcome of Igbo Traders	**Q^2predict**
Related Instructions	0.864		0.207
Profit outcome of Igbo Traders	0.880	0.859	0.267

The Common Method Bias (CMB)

Collinearity statistics was used to evaluate the common method bias in the SEM-PLS program. Liu, (2019) suggested that a VIF value higher than 3.3 suggests the presence of bias in the model. On the other, if the collinearity test, is equal to or lower than 3, then the model may be free from common method bias. The result from the table shows the variance for CMB to be 2.45 and 2.70, while the combined variance was 51.847%, see Table 3

Table 3
Common Method Bias for Related Instructions and Profit Outcomes of Igbo Traders in the Building Materials Market

SN	Variables	VIF [<3]	Decision	Variance Factor in % [> 50]
1	Related Instructions	2.45	Free of CMB	51.847
2	Profit Outcome of Igbo Traders	2.70	Free of CMB	

Evaluation of the Model fitness

The evaluation of model fitness in this study followed the recommendations of Hair (2021). This analysis utilized various fit indices to assess the alignment between the sample data and the predictions of the model. The results indicated a strong model fit, with an RMSR value of 0.053 (below the 0.08 threshold), a GFI of 0.924 (exceeding the 0.9 criterion), and a CMIN/DF value below 3 and this confirmed the adequacy of the model. Incremental fit measures also supported this conclusion, with NFI and CFI values of 0.918 and 0.925, respectively, both surpassing the 0.9 cutoff. These findings suggest that the model effectively captures the relationship between related instructions for apprentice and the profit outcome of Igbo traders in the building materials market. This model provides a reliable framework for understanding these dynamics. For the study, this implies that the model can be confidently used to inform strategies aimed at enhancing related instructions for apprentice and fostering the profit outcome of Igbo traders within the building materials market.

Evaluation of the Inner Structural Model for related instructions and profit Outcomes
To determine the significance of the path coefficients, inner structural model was employed. In PLS-SEM, using bootstrapping is crucial to assessing the level of significance (Méndez-Suárez, 2021). This inner model demonstrates the impact of related instructions on apprentice for the profit outcome of Igbo Traders in the building materials market, are presented in Table 3

Path Coefficients (β) and T-statistics estimation related instructions and profit outcomes
Partial Least Square was employed to obtain the path coefficients and standardised coefficient. The values obtained were used to test the significance of the hypothesis. The bigger the value, the more significant the influence on the profit outcome of Igbo Traders in the building materials market. This hypothesis predicted that business related instructions for apprentice significantly relates to the profit outcomes of Igbo Traders as displayed in Table 4

Table 4
Path Coefficients for Business Related Instructions and Profit Outcome of Igbo Traders in the Building Materials Market

Variables and Cross Loading	Path Co-efficient	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T-Statistics (O/ STDEV	P Values
Business Related Instructions -> Profit outcome of Igbo Traders	0.762	0.055	23.033	0.000
	R Square (R^2)		R Square (R^2) Adjusted	
Profit Outcome of Igbo Traders	0.580		0.571	

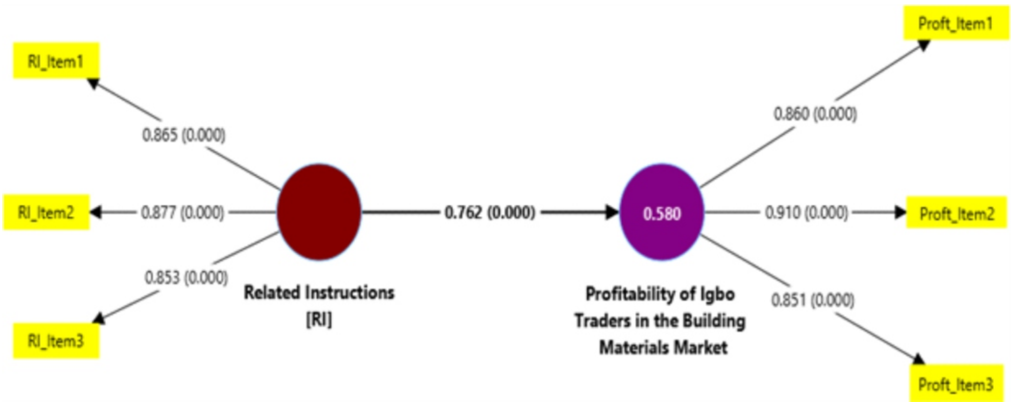

Figure 2 Predictive Relevance (Path co-efficient and P-values) of Business Related Instructions and Profit Outcome of Igbo Traders in the Building Materials Market

From table 4, it is revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between related instructions and the profit outcome of Igbo traders in the building materials market, with a path coefficient of 0.762. This high coefficient indicates that as the effectiveness of related instructions increases, so does the profitability of these traders. The T-statistic of 23.033, which is significantly above the threshold of 1.96, confirms the statistical significance of this relationship, with a p-value of 0.000 indicating that the results are highly reliable. Additionally, the R-squared value of 0.580 suggests that approximately 58% of the variance in profit outcome can be explained by business related instructions, for apprentice while the adjusted R-squared of 0.571 indicates a good model fit after accounting for the number of predictors.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The major purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between related instructions and profit outcome among the Igbo traders in the building materials market within Lagos and Ogun States, with specific targets at Alaba Suru in Lagos and Ota in Ogun state, Nigeria. The finding from the descriptive result revealed that 75% of the Igbo traders who received structured instructional training reported a significant increase in their profit margins.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that there is a strong positive relationship between business related instructions and the profit outcome of Igbo traders in the building materials market. This finding underscores the importance of comprehensive training programs that equip the traders with necessary technical knowledge and market insights. For Igbo traders, this suggests that investing in robust training curriculum can directly enhance their profit outcome and position them more favorably in a competitive market. For Igbo traders in the building materials market, these findings imply that enhancing the clarity and effectiveness of related instructions for apprentice can lead to substantial improvements in profit. This underscores the importance of structured training and clear communication of business practices, which can empower traders to make informed decisions and optimize their operations. By focusing on improving these instructional frameworks, Igbo traders in building materials can better navigate market challenges, ultimately leading to increased sales and profit. Therefore, investing in training programmes and resources that enhance understanding of business processes is crucial for sustaining competitive advantage in the building materials market.

The findings indicate that structured apprenticeship programs, which include business related instructions significantly enhance the profit outcome and operational efficiency of building materials traders. Specifically, traders who engaged in comprehensive training reported notable increases in profit margins and customer retention, highlighting the critical importance of education and skill development in driving business success. For Igbo traders, this suggests that investing in effective apprenticeship models can lead to substantial financial benefits and competitive advantages in a rapidly evolving market.
It is recommended based on the finding obtained from the study that there is a need to develop and implement a structured apprenticeship programs that incorporate both theoretical knowledge and practical training. These programs should be designed to cover essential areas such as product knowledge, customer service skills, and business management practices. Traders can collaborate with local educational institutions or vocational training centers to create a curriculum tailored to the specific needs of the building materials market. This partnership can facilitate workshops, seminars, and hands-on training sessions, ensuring that apprentices gain relevant skills that directly contribute to their performance in the field.

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