

Promotion of African Indigenous Business Models through Film: An Exploration of Igbo Trade Apprenticeship through Netflix 2024 Afamefuna - An Nwa-Boi Story

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Abstract:

This study explores the Igbo trade apprenticeship system as an indigenous business model, using a Netflix film, Afamefuna - An Nwa-Boi Story (2024) as a primary source. The thrust is to examine how film communicates ideology by discussing the tenets of the trade apprenticeship system among the south-east people of Nigeria called Ndigbo. Methodologically, it makes use of focus group discussions, in-depth interview and textual analysis to investigate the objectives of the study. The findings indicate film as a veritable tool in creating awareness and promoting the trade apprenticeship model as a panacea to unemployment, especially among the young people of Nigeria, most of who suffer in idleness after graduation from school because there is no job provided by the government for them. Thus, while it is recommended that the Nigerian government encourages the apprenticeship model by replicating it across her numerous agencies as a way of training young people in skills, the main thesis of this paper is that Nollywood filmmakers ought to start doing more of service-oriented movies that beyond entertainment values can point to answers that viewers look out for in life as is the case with Afamefuna that highlights the nwa-boi model for business minded people.

Keywords:

Films; Nollywood; Afamefuna; Igbo apprenticeship system; and indigenous business model.

I. Introduction

Business models since time immemorial have played significant roles in enhancing life. They serve as a strategic roadmap in guiding chances of business success and enabling entrepreneurs to adapt and thrive in a dynamic marketplace (Hiiremath, 2023). Countries have over time developed frameworks and models of businesses built on cultural attributes to enhance success rates. This is to say that different nations as well as ethnic communities have different approaches to businesses and works which influences the kind of models they adopt (Iwara et al., 2019; Vitalis et al., 2024).

In Nigeria, the Igbo tribe has an age long business model that has thrived and adjudged a successful model for wealth creation (Ugwu, 2023). This model is called in Igbo language the Igba-boi scheme. Simply put, it refers to a system of trade apprenticeship where a successful businessman undertakes to mentor an incomer who is an apprentice. The successful mentor does this by teaching the young man or woman the rudiments of his or her trade over an agreed period. While the boy who is undergoing the training is called nwa-boi in

the context of this model, the master or mentor who is the boss is popularly addressed as the oga, which is a colloquial term for one who is to be respected as master. On completion of his training under the boss, especially if he is considered good by his boss is settled in order to go and start his own business. The concept of settlement here implies that the boss throws a party for his successful apprentice in celebration of his graduation in the business and gives the seed capital and other kinds of support as he may deem fit, including mentorship, as he leaves to go and start his own business. Under this arrangement, the business model is entirely hinged on trust and docility between the oga (big boss) and the apprentice boi-boi or nwa-boi (Nworah, 2023; Yar'Adua et al., 2023). This Igbo trade apprenticeship model is regarded as the largest business incubator in the world as thousands of business ventures are established each year through it (Neuwirth, 2017; Msughter et al., 2023).

The media especially, film offer avenues to appreciate the trade model in various forms. Since films in Nigeria tend to speak to viewers with realities in their contexts, the scenarios of business enterprises are often represented. This is the idea behind *Afamefuna* which is a depiction of a business mogul agreeing to train a youngster that eventually made a name for himself up the ladder. Thus, the media help to promote this kind of mindset and by so doing promote and propagate the ideology of industriousness in viewers. The television and film media are in a vantage position to reaching a large audience (Msughter et al., 2023; Yar'Adua et al., 2023). With their advantage of audio and visuals, they also provide real-life experiences on entrepreneurship efforts in an exciting and compelling way which may attract people especially the youths, to become entrepreneurs like those represented in the media narratives (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019; Oreoluwa et al., 2024).

Films play important roles in the psyche of the audience. This is said because there is a “perceived realism” that underscores what is represented in such a way that it leads to higher levels of personal involvement in what is consumed in film (Pouliot & Cowen, 2007). In order to communicate a thematic thrust, the media can provide information material that is easy to understand without much additional input (European Commission, 2007; Kurfi et al., 2021). That input is the infusion of scintillating contents in films. There are movies that teach lessons about life which is the major attraction behind the production under study here. The objective of this study is to determine how the film communicated the ideology of the Igbo trade apprenticeship system as an indigenous business model for development and self-reliance as well as an antidote to the unemployment of young people in the society (Yar'Adua et al., 2021; Taiwo et al., 2024).

II. Review of Literatures

2.1 *Áfáméfùnà* - An Nwa-Boi Story

Áfáméfùnà: An NwaBoi Story is a two hours eight minutes Nigerian film written by Adaora Sandra Anyanwu and directed by Kayode Kasum. It tells the story of the apprenticeship model in Southeast region of Nigeria. Produced by Olawumi Fajemirokun and Kene Egbue, the film is the first ever feature length movie on the Igbo apprenticeship system in Nigeria. The cast includes Kanayo O. Kanayo, Stan Nze, Alexx Ekubo, Atlanta Bridget Johnson, Segun Arinze, Paul Nnadiokwe and Chuks Joseph.

Áfáméfùnà: An NwaBoi Story was released to the Nigerian cinemas on December 1, 2023. Before its release to the cinemas, it was shown at the 2023 Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF). The film made its debut on Netflix on the 29th of March 2024 and was the number one Nigerian movie on the platform for many weeks.

The film revolves around Áfáméfùnà (played by Stan Nze) who was brought in for questioning following the death of his friend Paulo (played by Alex Ekubo). The death of his friend then flashed back to the complex history of both friends, where they were both navigating the world of Igbo apprenticeship in Nigeria under Odogwu (played by Kanayo O. Kanayo). Things were going smooth between both friends until Odogwu decides to settle Áfáméfùnà (junior apprentice) before Paulo (senior apprentice). The prologue of the film reads:

The Igbos in Africa have been practicing for centuries what is known today as stakeholder capitalism. The Igbo apprenticeship system (IAS) has been recognized as the largest business incubator in the world as thousands of ventures are developed and established yearly through it. For the Igbos and some Africans, it is a working system which has brought equality and peaceful coexistence in communities. -Harvard Business Review.

The plot of the film opened with a discovery of a lifeless body of Paulo. The subsequent scene transitions to a traditional Igbo ceremony where Afamefuna was celebrating the memorial of his late father. The scene was characterised by vibrant dances, lively music, and a display of opulence through money spraying.

However, the ceremony is disrupted by the police, who stood their ground that the host, Afamefuna (Afam), accompany them to the station for questioning concerning the death of his friend, Paul Obiajulu (Paulo). ASP Shehau (Segun Arinze) escorts Afamefuna to the Police station for interrogation, setting the stage for Afamefuna to recount his Nwa boy's story through a series of flashbacks, elucidating his connection with Paul.

The teenage Afamefuna, portrayed by Paul Nnadiékwe, hails from Onitsha and is placed under the mentorship of Odogwu (Kanayo O. Kanayo) by his mother to learn the rudiments of the business. He was introduced to Paulo, a seasoned senior apprentice in Odogwu's business empire, who was knowledgeable in the market dynamics. Paulo assumes the role of a mentor, acquainting Afam with the art of sales, and grooming him on intricacies and dynamics within the market. While Afam is learning from their Oga, Paulo takes on the role of nurturing his growth.

Events takes an unexpected turn years later when Odogwu, decides to settle Afam, the junior apprentice before Paulo who came before Afam. Paulo's questionable character, which includes a secret affair with the master's daughter, Amaka portrayed by Atlanta Bridget Johnson may have resulted in their master's preference in settling Afam first over Paulo. This act soils the relationship between Afam and Paulo. Their relationship worsened when Afam later married Odogwu's daughter Amaka, despite Amaka been romantically involved with Paulo. This brought about the paternity issue over Afam's son whom Paulo claims he (Paulo) fathered.

Afam who never wanted any scandal gave in to Paulo's incessant blackmail for money and forced Afam into paying off his debt incurred in his criminal involvement with the Danladi Group. When Afam felt that he could no longer give in to Paulo's blackmail decided to stop payment to the Danladi Group. This made the cartel go after Paulo, and possibly killed him for renegading on payment. When his lifeless body was found Afam became the prime suspect.

2.2 The Igbo Trade Apprenticeship System as a Business Model

'*Onyeaghalanwanneya*', an Igbo language saying, which literally means 'may you never abandon your brother', is the cultural guideline and ideology among the Igbo people of Nigeria. This belief explains that the wealth of a man is wealth for the community, and a man is obligated to teach his brothers the secrets of wealth, to create an even and balanced community (Yemi, 2021). This is the heart of the Igbo trade apprenticeship system.

The Igbo trade apprenticeship system is a Nigerian model for stakeholder capitalism, and a hub for wealth creation. The Igbo people of Southeast part of Nigeria have practiced for a very long time what is known today as stakeholder capitalism. Stakeholder capitalism is described as a construct that businesses must elevate the interests of communities, workers, consumers, and the environment alongside those of shareholders (Ekekwe, 2021; Nworah, 2023). The Igbo apprentice system, also known as the Igbo trade apprentice system and commonly referred to as '*Igba-Odibo/Igba-Boi/Igba-Boyi/Imu-Abia/Imu-Oru*', is a framework of formal and informal indentured agreements between parties that ultimately facilitate burgeoning entrepreneurial communities within the Igbos. It is an economic model practiced widely by Igbos and originated in South-Eastern Nigeria. Its purposes were and still remain to spur economic growth and stability, and sustainable livelihood by financing and investing in human resources through vocational training (Agozino & Anyanike, 2007).

This apprenticeship system is a communal enterprising framework where successful businesses develop others, and over time provide capital and pass along their customers to the new businesses (Nworah, 2023); its focus is to prevent poverty by mass scaling opportunities for everyone (Ekekwe, 2021). This system has been recognized as one of the largest business incubator in the world as thousands of ventures are developed and established yearly through it (Neuwirth, 2017). It has helped in reducing unemployment in the South-East region as it informally provides employment to thousands of youth in the region (Nworah, 2024). Unsurprisingly, Abia, Anambra and Imo States of southeastern Nigeria where this apprenticeship system is practiced are among the states with the lowest poverty and income inequality rates in Nigeria (Okafor, 2022; Ugwu, 2023).

Nworah (2024) giving an exposition on the Igbo apprenticeship scheme states that:

It has helped in improving the economic fortunes of states and countries where Ndigbo sojourn. Take Lagos state for example, if you visit the big markets with large populations of Igbo traders, for example, Idumota, ASPANDA, Ladipo, Trade Fair, Orile and such other large markets. You will observe Ndigbo working hard in their various shops. You will also observe the 'Ogas' and their 'BoiBois' (apprentices). Those 'Boi-Bois' today will become the 'Ogas' of tomorrow. By the time the apprentices complete their apprenticeship, they will be 'settled', given seed capital by their 'Ogas' to start their own businesses. In addition to the seed capital, the Ogas also help pay for one year shop rental for the freed Boi-Boi who is also given some goods on credit to start with. The cycle continues because when the 'Boi-Bois' start their own business, they will in-turn take under their wings another set of 'Boi-Bois'.

This Igbo trade apprenticeship model has created much equitable wealth that it can no longer be ignored. The system is by far the most entrenched and vibrant entrepreneurship promotion vehicle in Nigeria and it plays a major role in the growth and development of micro, small and medium scale enterprises; it is a big driver for wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction and thus economic growth and development (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019). The importance of the model is now starring at people. They are realizing that it

has become imperative to look inwards and re-discover economic and entrepreneurship promotion models such as the Igbo apprenticeship scheme that has continued to make the Igbo economy strong, and Igbo people stronger with little or no government support (Nworah, 2024).

The strength of the Igbo trade apprenticeship model lies in the fact that in Igbo land, the measure of a man is based on how he has made those that worked under him better; for instance, in some villages in Ohafia and Arochuku of Abia State, Nigeria, before elders can permit one to talk, the one must begin by naming “boys” he made men, and one cannot speak in the village square if his apprentices are not progressing (Ekekwe, 2018).

The Igbo trade apprenticeship model, passed down through generations, has had a significant positive effect on the southeastern region of Nigeria. It has achieved high entrepreneurship rates as the region is known for its vibrant trade scene, with many successful businesses run by former apprentices; Economic dynamism as the constant influx of new businesses fuels innovation and job creation; Community-driven growth as the model fosters collaboration and mentorship, creating a supportive network for aspiring entrepreneurs; empowered individuals by providing practical skills and financial support, the model creates self-employed individuals, fostering economic independence and reducing poverty; promoted social mobility regardless of background, as anyone with talent and dedication can climb the economic ladder; and has also achieved cultural preservation as the system upholds Igbo values like hard work, respect, and community spirit, ensuring their transmission to future generations (SEREDDEC, 2024).

A Forbes Africa report indicated that Nnewi, a town in Anambra State, Southeast of Nigeria has more naira billionaires per capita than anywhere else in the country (Forbes Africa, 2017). The Igbo apprenticeship model remains the major reason for that (Yemi, 2021).

When an Igbo business person becomes successful, the next course of action is to take the wealth back home by seeking a ‘Nwaboi’ to establish him. Once the ‘Nwaboi’ graduates and is settled, he pays what his master has done for him forward by picking another apprentice that will serve him. At the same time, before his graduation, his master would have gone home to pick another apprentice who would learn the trade before his settlement, thereby creating a circle of wealth. Through this system, many millionaires are waiting to be born, and are either being ingratiated, incubated or funded (Yemi, 2021).

Meanwhile, one of the greatest challenges of this scheme is the fact that the apprentice misses out on a level of education. The child most often has to drop from school to join the apprenticeship scheme. While some can enter into it quite early and possibly means dropping out on primary education, some other tend to enter the business model at a particular point after some level of education (Msughter et al., 2021; Msughter et al., 2023).

2.3 Roles Films Play In Promoting Business Ideologies

The mass media can promote entrepreneurial culture in terms of an entrepreneurial mindset, start-up motives and entrepreneurial orientation; and provide “triggering events” that change opinion to intention or intention to action, thereby fostering entrepreneurship spirit (Salo, 1992). The media are expected to perform vital role in influencing the entrepreneurial phenomenon (Eikhof et al., 2013; Idris & Msughter, 2022; Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024a).

The non-portrayal of entrepreneurial programmes by the media is a potential danger to propagation of entrepreneurial enterprise. However, when the media promotes and portray entrepreneurship activities in good light through their programmes, they are promoting more positive social values towards entrepreneurship, with one in five non-entrepreneurs being motivated to start their own business having watched programmes in the media (Hart, 2010). In order to improve the image of entrepreneurship in society and thereby the propensity of people to consider becoming entrepreneurially active, the mass media, plays an important role (Nwoga et al., 2020; Msughter et al., 2023).

Furthermore, images of successful entrepreneurs presented in the media, can promote entrepreneurial intentions and actions (Boyle & Magor, 2008; Hile et al., 2023). The media can be used to motivate and develop an entrepreneurial culture among the youths and students in Nigeria. TV films and documentaries on successful stories of well-known entrepreneurs throughout the world can be a programme to be broadcast frequently for people to watch (Nwoga et al., 2020; Aondover et al., 2022).

Entrepreneurial learning occurs through a variety of media channels. Film, as an educational medium, makes a significant contribution to economic and social growth (Aondover et al., 2022; Jayeoba, 2023; Msughter et al., 2023). Film as a mass media laden with visual appeal plays prominent role in showcasing and propagating entrepreneurial activities as it can teach us powerful lessons about entrepreneurship and leadership. As people are entertained through films, entrepreneurship contents infused in it will be seen. Teaching students entrepreneurial skills could be easier using films with entrepreneurship contents. It has been found that working with film is highly motivating for the students, and that film offers different insights in comparison with other instructional media as it tends to focus on emotions, moral dilemmas, and interpersonal relationships (van Gelderen & Verduyn, 2003; Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024b).

Films that have successful business models or business contents infused in them can attract the youth to become entrepreneurs. This can promote entrepreneurial culture in terms of an entrepreneurial mindset, business start-up motives and entrepreneurial orientation (Nwoga et al., 2020; Aondover et al., 2023). Films are in a vantage position to enchant and refocus the mindset of the viewer. Despite the fact that films are mostly fiction, they are not far from reality. Feature films are not only about starting or running a business, they tell stories about entrepreneurship in conjunction with other aspects of life, such as love relationships, family relationships, and all sorts of local conditions (Usman et al., 2022; Aondover et al. 2023).

III. Research Methods

This study used qualitative research method comprising of the focus group discussion (FGD) and In-depth interview techniques. The Focus group discussion technique was chosen because it allows the investigator to solicit both the participants' shared narrative as well as their differences in terms of experiences, opinions and worldviews during such 'open' discussion rounds (Swiss, TPH (2017). The in-depth interview was also chosen because it would make you collect data which offer rich insights into your target audience's experience and preferences from a broad sample (Obasi & Msughter, 2023; QuestionPro, 2024).

The FGD was conducted in six select federal universities, two universities each from Southeast, South-south and Southwest States of Nigeria respectively. Select Southeast

Universities included: Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo Ebonyi State (AE-FUNAI), and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State (UNN); South-south Universities were University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, (UNIPORT), and University of Calabar, Cross River State, (UNICAL); and Southwest Universities were University of Lagos (UNILAG) and University of Ibadan (UNIBADAN). Through purposeful sampling technique (Palinkas, et al., 2013), the participants were painstakingly selected in the select tertiary institutions, to reflect the diverse ethnicity in Nigeria. Six undergraduate participants each were drawn from these select Universities, totaling thirty-six people that were involved in the FGD. The thirty-six participants were made up of nine people each from the three dominant ethnic groups of Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani, and combination of other minority ethnic groups.

The in-depth interview participants were six academic staff from Mass Communication, Business Administration and Theatre Arts selected from each of the six universities, through snowball sampling technique. The in-depth interview session focused mainly on the issues that could not receive satisfactory answers through the FGD.

The FGD and in-depth interviews based on a topic guide were used to enable a detailed exploration of student's views and experiences using a flexible and responsive approach (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Interviews were audio-recorded at the participant's home universities, and lasted between 55-60 minutes. There were preliminary discussions with the potential participants to ascertain if they had watched the movie *Afamefuna - An Nwa-Boi Story*. Those yet to, especially from other ethnic groups aside Igbo, were made to watch the movie by making it available to them. This was to prepare their minds on reviewing the tenets of Igbo trade apprenticeship system inherent in the film. Thematic analysis was used to identify dominant themes that align with the research questions (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). The identified themes and patterns were organized in line with dominant quotes and used them to present the findings. The interview guide included the following prompts to elicit participant views and experiences: The film communicating more ideology and promotion for the indigenous business models among undergraduate students in Nigeria; tenets of the Igbo trade apprenticeship model as exposed in the film; and roles the film – *Afamefuna* played in propagating and refocusing the Igbo trade model.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 If the Film Communicated More Ideology and Promotion for Igbo Trade Apprenticeship System

The first objective of the study was to determine if the film - *Afamefuna* communicated more ideology and promotion for the Igbo trade apprenticeship system among undergraduate students in Nigeria. The discussants all agreed that the film has actually raised the awareness on the Igbo trade apprenticeship system. Some of them, even those of Igbo extraction, averred that they now understand better the Igbo business module.

Participants responded thus on the level of ideology the film communicated for the for Igbo trade apprenticeship system:

This movie helped me understand a lot about the Igbo Apprenticeship system. All that Odugwu (Kanayo) discussed about an Igbo businessman is undeniably true. There are many of them in Aba, Lagos, Onitsha and other parts of Nigeria (P01).

The Igbo business empire and how it's built on hard work and brotherhood, make me feel that there's more about the Igbo people I should read more about (P03).

It's a really beautiful piece of storytelling of a system that has made a tribe spread wealth from one generation to generation, making them prosperous in business. Truly, through this film Nollywood further created more awareness for the Igbo business model (P05).

Extract from the in-depth interview equally concurred that the film actually propagated the Igbo business module.

Áfāméfùnà is as a resounding narrative of the Igbo apprenticeship system, bringing to limelight the cultural heritage, hard work, ambition, sacrifice, resilience and love that have shaped this business model (P019).

The combination the ethnic elements in the film made it more appealing, as such more people were eager to watch it; this invariably created awareness on the Igbo trade apprenticeship system which was the main theme of the movie.

Áfāméfùnà skillfully brings forth the richness of Igbo culture. The film seamlessly weaves together traditions, language, and cultural diversity, with most dialogues conducted in Igbo, and infused with elements of Yoruba and Hausa languages; this to me has made the film appealing to many people outside the Igbo region (P10).

Taking a cue on the foregoing, this film beautifully captures the unity and distinctiveness of Nigerian tribes. This portrayal has helped create more awareness for the Igbo apprenticeship system. (P15).

The cast skillfully played their characters, bringing a delightful narrative of the intricacies of the Igbo apprenticeship system. Each cast effectively conveyed the diverse experiences encountered in Nwa-Boy's journey (P12).

The movie briefly explains the Igbo business system, which other parts of the country have for long been trying to understand. The film has let us into how that system functions. I believe that many non-Igbo people now have idea of how it functions. This could make them emulate the system. Kudos to the producers of the film (P13).

It could be deduced from above responses that the film Afamefuna has greatly raised the level of awareness and promotion for Igbo trade apprenticeship system especially among undergraduate students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This finding is supported by Framed Rever (2024) which asserted that films offer an ideal blend of audio and video, making themselves the perfect tools for raising awareness about a brand, its product, or its services and are important growing medium for beginners as well as popular businesses; European Commission (2007) which stated that the audio-visual media offer a broad range of opportunities for promoting entrepreneurship; that the largely unexploited opportunity for promoting entrepreneurship is the use of films as films play important roles in the psychic of the audience (Pouliot & Cowen, 2007). Film creates awareness of the business spirit and promote the entrepreneurial culture (www.bibaoekintza.eus, 2023); media portrayals of the

enterprise are promoting more positive social values towards entrepreneurship (Hart, 2010); Boyle and Magor (2008) that positive images of entrepreneurship on the media could promote entrepreneurial intentions and behaviour.; WFCN (2024) that *films*, with their captivating scripts and visual allure, possess a unique capacity to reach a vast film audience and leave an indelible impact on society; Jayeoba (2023) that film as a mass media laden with visual appeal plays prominent role in showcasing and propagating entrepreneurial activities; and that film offers different insights in comparison with other instructional media as it tends to focus on emotions, moral dilemmas, and interpersonal relationships (van Gelderen &Verduyn, 2003).

4.2 The Tenets of the Igbo Trade Apprenticeship System as Exposed in the Film

The second objective was to discuss the tenets of the Igbo trade apprenticeship system as exposed in the film.

Quotes that align with the theme of hard work and integrity included:

The movie underscores hard work and integrity as the cornerstone of success, emphasizing the importance of discerning prime business locations and eventually becoming the town's mayor (P04).

I appreciate that the movie refrained from depicting human ritual as a method of earning money because it is superstitious and inhumane. This isn't to deny people's involvement in it but to highlight that human ritual often serves as a cover-up for money laundering, fraud, and other illegal activities (P40).

There is another takeaway point I enjoyed in that movie. The part where the Dan Ladi group came to Onyeisi to offer him a mouth-watering deal just to use his business for money laundering. He refused. Onyeisi's integrity was tested, and he won. He knew he had been in business for a long time, and he couldn't let the people who trusted him for a long time get disappointed just because he was being offered millions that could disappear anytime (P42).

Paulo, who did the business with Dan Ladi group, paid with his life because when you do business with such dangerous group, taking your pound of flesh won't be an issue for them in case business go wrong (41).

Truth be told , Igbo style of business deserved a course of study in all Universities in the country because their style of business promote hard work, consistency , tenacity , perseverance and give no room for theft except if you want to soil your dignity and bring shame to your clan (P25).

These are what make the Igbo trade apprenticeship system thick; this is a system that recognizes and rewards honesty, dedication, hard work, innovativeness and industry. Kanayo's character, Odogwu, reflects on the journey of the Igbo business.

One other emotion speech was when Odogwu spoke on the essence of Igbo business system pointing out that the Igbo business empire is built on hard work and brotherhood.

For me it was where Odogwu recounted the effect of Nigeria civil war on the Igbo business where she said that the Igbo business collapsed after the war. "Afamefuna, the war did something to us. War is bad; Igbos do not steal, Igbos do not beg (P28)."

This powerful monologue not only delves into the effects of war but also emphasizes the essence of hard work and unity in the Igbo culture; a bedrock to the sustenance of the Igbo trade apprenticeship system.

Quotes that align with the theme of Mentorship included:

I admire this wisdom in the proverbs used by Odogwu in the film. Such as if you because of money marry a monkey, when the money finishes at some point, the monkey will still remain a monkey (P26).

Through this proverb, Odogwu imparts valuable lessons to his newest apprentice, the wide-eyed seventeen-year-old Afamefuna. The teachings encompass not only business ethics but also delve into the sentimental and historical aspects of the trade.

The way Paulo enlightened Afamefuna about the ways of the street, teaching him the tactics of doing business among various characters showed mentorship (P21).

This showed that to survive in business, integrity alone is not sufficient; one had to adopt the guise of a warrior to defend oneself and combat enemies. In Afam's life, Paulo was a mentor.

Quotes that align with the theme of ingenuity included:

The scene where a pregnant woman was discontented about a not-too-good wall paper sold to her, and how Paulo gently calmed her down, shows ingenuity and marketing skills (P24).

This shows the premium value the Igbo trade apprenticeship system attaches to the customer. To them, the customer is the king; and this is one the major things that sustain their business. It is believed that when a customer is treated well he would return for more goods.

Another show of ingenuity was where Paul managed to sell a towel to a woman when what they sell was building materials. He does not want any money to bypass him (P8).

For me, the Afam exhibited ingenuity when talked and pleaded with the Comptroller of Customs at the Wharf into releasing his masters (odogwu) goods which they were demanding very huge amount of money. This really pleased Odogwu and could have played a major role in Odogwu settling Afam with huge start-up capital before Paulo (P17).

Paulo's jealousy over Afamefuna's favor with their boss led him down a dark path, abandoning integrity and legality in pursuit of wealth, ultimately costing him his life.

Quotes that align with the theme of cultural preservation included:

The film exposed themes central to Igbo culture and human virtues of ambition, sacrifice, and resilience. It displayed the integrity and originality within the Igbo apprenticeship tradition, and underscores the relevance of cultural preservation and transmission (P37).

'Afamefunu' goes beyond mere entertainment; it offered a deep, enriching creative journey into Igbo heritage and their never-say-no spirit. Its acclaim is a testament to its cultural significance and universal appeal (P27).

Without doubt, the movie shows the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people, their entrepreneurship spirit, and the drive for economic independence (39).

The identified themes of hard work, Integrity, ingenuity, mentorship, brotherhood, and cultural preservation align with the tenets of the Igbo trade apprenticeship system. This finding was supported by Uduafemhe (2023) who identified the key features of the Igbo apprenticeship model as the emphasis on practical learning, community, and the focus on long-term goals; SEREDDEC (2024) assertions that the key ingredients of Igbo trade apprenticeship system are that of Mentorship, Practical Learning, strong sense of Community, and Cultural Values. Support for the theme of hard work is that it is a necessary component of success for nearly everyone (Watkins, 2021); Entrepreneurship requires a very great amount of perseverance, relentless efforts and utmost important, commitment to cope with the changing tastes, preferences and market scenarios to run a successful business (Bakshi, 2019); Hard work is the foundation upon which success is built. It is the action of doing something with a sense of purpose, making sure that every effort is made to achieve the desired outcome (Fastercapital.com, 2024); The price of success is hard work (Farrell, 2022); There is no secret to success beyond motivation and hard work (Isaacs, 2020); and Success in business is about setting goals and achieving them, and the secret is hard work (Tamim, 2016).

Speaking of the theme of integrity is that Integrity in business is an essential ingredient for sustainable, long-term, business growth and success (Briscoe, 2019); Integrity is a core element for the success of a business whether freelancing or entrepreneurship (Yusoff, et al. (2016); Entrepreneurs should always prioritize integrity and truthfulness in their businesses, as it builds trust with customers, attracts investors, establishes credibility, avoids legal and financial consequences, and improves team morale (Adepegba, 2023); and Entrepreneurs who prioritize integrity are more likely to be seen as reliable and trustworthy, which enhances their brand image and attracts more customers and business opportunities (peakgenesis.com, 2024).

On another support for ingenuity as a key tenet of the Igbo trade apprenticeship system are entrepreneurship is a process that requires creativity, risk taking and planning (Karimi & Gholami, 2014); Creativity and innovation (ingenuity) have become the vital point to enhance the value of entrepreneurship. Creativity help us how to improve existing business practice. Innovation is about making a process that can convert invention or gain idea to become more marketable product or service (Bin Mazla et al., 2019); and that entrepreneurial ingenuity can be instrumental in helping sustainability initiatives succeed (Siqueira & Honig, 2019).

As regards mentorship as a tenet of the Igbo business module are that mentorship is crucial in helping aspiring entrepreneurs develop the skills and knowledge needed to start and

manage a business. Mentors can provide direction, guidance and moral support to young entrepreneurs to help them overcome the challenges and difficulties faced in starting and running a business (Prastyaningtyas, et al., 2023); that mentoring provides to the learner a valuable insights and feedback that may not ordinarily be available to him, fosters personal development, and open doors to new opportunities (fastercapital.com, 2024). Mentoring transmit and/or complete competences, skills and abilities that are not acquired through the classical education system (Nicoleta & Chioncel, 2014); 70% of small businesses (pushfar.com) that receive mentoring survive five years or more, twice the rate of those who don't have mentoring relationships (AIContentfy team, 2024); and on Cultural preservation that preserving and promoting your cultural identity through your business can be a powerful way to celebrate and share your heritage (www. fastercapital.com, 2024).

4.3 The Roles the Film – Afamefuna Played in Propagating and Refocusing the Igbo Trade Apprenticeship System

The third objective was to unearth role the film played in helping to reposition, re-build, and rebrand the Igbo trade apprenticeship system as well as other indigenous business models.

The producers of the film my opinion did wonderfully well, combining business and entrepreneurial activities with entertainment in the movie. In this way, the film has been positioned to perform duties of entertaining, teaching and propagating the process of the Igbo trade apprenticeship system, which looks somewhat crude, but whose success has baffled many (P06).

I must tell you the film has done a lot for the Igbo trade apprenticeship system. It has actually exposed it to the world; and has giving inspiration to a lot of people; bear in mind the millions of people worldwide that watch Nollywood movies (P11).

The film has actually repositioned the Igbo business system. More people outside the Igbo ethnic group are now beginning to understand and appreciate the business practice. There is no doubt that this film would motivate viewers and arouse their feelings and make think toward entrepreneurship (P05).

The film has brought out the Igbo trade apprenticeship system in a new limelight. People are now seeing it from a renewed perspective. And I feel this is a good development. It was mediums to get a message of entrepreneurship out to the people (P04).

The film – Afamefuna is a huge leap forward for indigenous entrepreneurship. It brought to open the intricacies of the Igbo trade apprenticeship system. It has also exposed those things that have made that business model weather the storm, despite its shortcomings such as the process makes young boys to drop out of school to join a mentor who would tutor him in business for several years (P06).

The film played important roles in helping to reposition, re-build, and rebrand the Igbo trade apprenticeship system as well as other indigenous business models. This finding was supported by Rios (2022) who stated that films elicit reactions that could make an impact on society through decisions inspired by a thought-provoking film; Algarme (2018) and

Batham-Hendrei (2024) who said that *entrepreneurs can gain inspiration and motivation in the film*. Framed Rever (2024), that pointed out that films are perfect tools for raising awareness about a brand, its product, or its services and are important growing medium for beginners as well as popular businesses. Also supporting our finding is the assertion that films are capable of making a contribution to understanding of innovation and entrepreneurship (Wood et al., 2017; *Skorin-Kapov*, 2018); films about entrepreneurs inspire potential entrepreneurs by raising awareness of the business spirit and the generation of the entrepreneurial culture (www.santanderopenacademy.com, 2021; www.bibaoekintza.eus, 2023); and visual communication, especially films, can be an effective way to teach complex topics (Chang, 2019).

V. Conclusion

Aside some inherent challenges associated with the Igbo trade apprenticeship system such as the practice that child has to stop education in a school to join the apprenticeship scheme, and a lack of guaranteed access to startup funding after graduation from the master, another latent challenge facing the system is lack of continuity, as no successful Igbo man who is a product of apprenticeship, would send off his son to become an apprentice at another person's enterprise. He would rather send him to school. The reason being that apprenticeship is perceived to be for the poor; their opportunity to have a life since their parents hadn't the resources to educate them in school. Suffice it to note that despite noticeable challenges, the Igbo trade apprenticeship system has enabled the Igbo people to build collective wealth. However, this business model that has stood the test of time has remained relatively complex and its modus operandi unknown to many people outside the Igbo ethnic enclave.

We therefore conclude that the mass media in general and films in particular play pivotal roles in propagation of entrepreneurial activities, of which the Igbo trade apprenticeship model is one. With film as an audio-visual medium, mass awareness on entrepreneurial spirits and culture can be created. We also conclude that with tenets of the Igbo business model laid bare, more people will come to appreciate it and possibly adopted it as the model has been tested and has been adjudged one of the largest business incubators in the world as thousands of ventures are developed and established yearly through it (Neuwirth, 2017); and those films play crucial parts in assisting to reorganize, remodel, and repackage the indigenous business models such the Igbo trade apprenticeship system.

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