

# An Exploratory Study Of Igbo Entrepreneurial Activity And Business Success In Nigeria As The Panacea For Economic Growth And Development

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**Abstract:** It is no doubt that Igbo entrepreneurs play vital roles in the growth of the Nigerian economy. Igbo Entrepreneurial activities have been observed to be a backbone for the economy of Nigeria and have facilitated improved standard of living of the people at both rural and urban settings. This study aims at investigating whether the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development, and whether the Igbo Trade Apprenticeship System is a rationale behind their business success. The study used both primary and secondary source for gathering reliable and adequate data and information. The primary sources of data include the personal interview and questionnaire administered to the sampled metropolises (Sango-Ota, Ifo, Oshodi and Apapa); and the secondary sources include textbooks, journal and internet. Taro Yamane sampling method was adopted to determine the sample size, and Bowler's proportional allocation method to distribute questionnaires in these selected metropolises. To analyze the data gathered for this study, descriptive statistical tool, tables and Likert Scale method were used. The study revealed that the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development, and that ITAS is a business success factor. It was concluded that the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development. The study therefore recommended that Nigerians and the people of other developing countries of the world should emulate the Igbo entrepreneurship culture for economic development purpose.

**Key Words:** Business success, Economic growth, Igbo Entrepreneurship culture, Igbo Trading Apprenticeship System.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent time, the increasing numbers of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) and large business enterprises have translated into correlative growth of the Nigerian economy. In Nigeria, Small and Medium Industries and Equality Investment Scheme (SMIEIS) defines SMEs as any enterprises with a maximum assets based on ₦200m excluding land and working capital and with number of staff employed not less than 10 or more than 300 [9]. It is no doubt that SMEs constitute immensely the growth of most economy in developing countries. The Small and Medium Scale (SME) business remain the most dynamic force and agent of economic growth and development of a nation, [16]. If the impact of SMEs in Nigeria had been outrightly ignored, the economy may have experienced high mortality rate in most of its sectors. Onu and Onu [14] in their article opined that small business firms form the bedrock of the economic growth in every nation, and no country achieves a viable economic growth and development without the establishment of small business firm.

In accordance with this, Onuoha [15] concluded that SMEs constitute a vital engine to economic growth and development of any nations. Entrepreneurs are said to be the brain behind the existing and consistent operations of successful small scale businesses. The concept of entrepreneurship has been associated with several activities concerned with the establishment and operating of business enterprise, [10]. Igbo Entrepreneurial activities have been observed to be a sine qua non for the economy of Nigeria and the quality of life of the people at both rural and urban settings. Entrepreneurial activity is the enterprising human action in pursuit of the generation of value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets, [3]. According to Maliga [11], research result by an Independent body show that 74% of investment in Lagos are own by Igbos, 5% by Hausa/Fulani, 15% by Foreigners (Non-Nigerians), 5% by other Nigerians (Non-Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba), 1% by Yorubas which include Mike Adenuga. Udegbe [17] added that statistics shows in Lagos that Igbos investment is not less than N300 trillion; it is double of that in Abuja at about N600 trillion; In Kano and Kaduna, Igbo investment run up to N10 trillion respectively, while in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, Igbo investment run into N5 trillion respectively; In Plateau State, Igbo investment is hovering over N15 trillion. One of the major arguments being used to explain why African countries, including Nigeria, have not been able to develop, or more appropriately, have been acquiring development hiccups, is that this set of people have not been given enough chance to participate in the development process, [13]. According to Agazie [2], remove the Igbos from the country, and Nigeria will collapse like 1-2-3, like a flimsy deck of cards. In similar tenet, Governor Gabriel Suswan of Benue State opined that any State government that ignores the Igbos does so at the risk of its economy, [17]. Of the three main ethnic groups in Nigeria, LeVine argues that the Igbos are the most energetic parvenus who have successfully challenged the established order of supremacy which the Yoruba occupied in the elitist professional civil service establishments, [13].

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## Objectives of The Study

This study aimed at finding out the factors that are responsible for Igbos business success and the role of the Igbos in the Nigerian economic growth and development. The main objectives of this study are to:

- i. Determine whether the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development.
- ii. Investigate the Igbo entrepreneurship skills; and
- iii. Ascertain the factors behind the Igbo business success.

## Research Hypothesis

In order to establish a valid argument and corroborate necessary facts concerning the objective (one) above, a hypothesis was drawn:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** That the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are not the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development

**H<sub>1</sub>:** That the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development

## IGBO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The word Igbo Entrepreneurship was derived from Igbo (culture) and Entrepreneurship. This simply means planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling other factors of production and production process in Igbo learning culture. Therefore, an Igbo entrepreneur is a person who does not only coordinate other factors of production, but who from time to time seeks opportunities to make profit through his/her innovativeness, creativity, customers' satisfaction and efficient utilization of scarce resources in a consistent cultural pattern. Thus, Igbo entrepreneurs are visionary, enthusiastic and result driven. These are not far from the rationale behind their undertakings in high business risk. Without policies and programmes suitable for backup and growth from any source, fountains are still made by these unique entrepreneurs in the Nigerian business environment. In the real fact, it is never gainsaying that people at the rural and urban areas in Nigeria depend heavily on the Igbo entrepreneurs' initiatives, inventions and efficient outcomes. The Igbo entrepreneurs have dominated Nigeria and even across the national boundary, such as South Africa, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali and Gambia, China and so on. Igbo entrepreneurs possess the characteristics as outlined by Burduş [6]:

- i. **confidence in personal abilities**, due to optimism that demonstrate success when targeting, which many times but can also lead to failure;
- ii. **the desire for immediate results**, which causes them to continuously monitor the results, which will confirm whether they have done right or wrong;
- iii. **preference for a moderate risk**, which means they face no risk in any circumstances, but a calculated risk, but nevertheless in the eyes of others may seem like an impossible goal;
- iv. **willingness to assume responsibilities**, preferring to control their own resources to achieve their objectives;
- v. **high energy**, above average, which allows him to make incredible effort needed to start a business, business creation;

- vi. **vision** to enable the discovery times discovery future opportunities, not to meditate on the successes or failures that have passed;
- vii. **organizing skills**, which allows entrepreneurs to put together people who carry out certain tasks, to combined so as to implement the vision;
- viii. **the desire to achieve, above money making** entrepreneur motivation is more complex, expressing the first urge to go further, to do for others is impossible, the money represents only a confirmation of success ;
- ix. **high level of commitment**, which makes them hard to work for a company that creates success, removing barriers that seem insurmountable to others;
- x. **tolerance of ambiguity**, as an absolute necessity entrepreneurs, who often must make decisions based on uncertain information, or even contradictory;
- xi. **flexibility**, which is the ability of entrepreneurs to adapt to changing customer demand, is a important characteristic of entrepreneurs.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS

For an entrepreneur to transform his/her inventive or innovative idea and/or maintain a stable growth in his/her venture, reasonable level of skills may be essential. The economic activities of Igbos all over the country have accounted for the excellent interpretation of their skills. In Nigeria, Igbos took over South West economy from the British not from other tribes and never by force or with arms but by economic skills and strategies built through progressive business mind, [11]. The skills require for doing business are showcased in the table I below.

| Technical skills              | Business Management       | Personal Entrepreneurial skills |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Writing                       | Planning and goal setting | Inner control/discipline        |
| Oral communication            | Decision making           | Risk taker                      |
| Monitoring environment        | Human relation            | Innovative                      |
| Technical business management | Marketing                 | Change oriented                 |
| Technology                    | Finance                   | Persistent                      |
| Interpersonal                 | Accounting                | Visionary leader                |
| Listening                     | Management                | Ability to manage change        |
| Ability to organize           | Control                   |                                 |
| Network building              | Negotiation               |                                 |
| Management style              | Venture launch            |                                 |
| Coaching                      | Managing growth           |                                 |
| Being a team player           |                           |                                 |

**Source:** Onuoha, B.C. [15]

## IGBO TRADE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM (ITAS)

The beginning of the Igbo business learning culture is the Igbo Trade Apprenticeship System (ITAS). The Igbo Trade Apprenticeship System is a kind of informal and unstructured training program, scheduled for an agreed period of time, which a person undergoes in order to acquire a desirable aspect of entrepreneurship skill. Igbo is the most capable of teaching the world trade education through the development and automation of this ITAS, [7]. The ITAS is a vibrant part of the Igbo business attributes that has for long been shaping their mental and intelligent quotient about business success.

The ITAS captures most of the skill above.

### Why Igbos Ventures In Business?

Igbos are renowned globally for their zeal and tenacity that they have for business; a unique trait that has distinguished them from others, [8]. Many factors are parallel to this fact. Ile [10] pinpointed certain values which are derived when people go into business as follows

- i. Profit
- ii. Social approval
- iii. Service to the community and employees
- iv. Personal satisfaction
- v. Livelihood
- vi. Power
- vii. Independence
- viii. Family jobs
- ix. Retirement security.

Nworah [12] expressed that Igbos have always relied on self-help and self-enterprise in business. This is paradoxically true, following the then Nigeria civil war and the quest for means of livelihood beyond their tribal boundaries after the war.

### IGBOS HIGH RISK TAKING PHENOMENON

Igbos are most fearless ethnic group in Nigeria, who see risk as a means of exploiting opportunities. They do businesses under very harsh environments where there are no well planned city arrangements that can make business less stressful, convenient with full functional infrastructure, [7]. The type of risks that would have paralyzed an average entrepreneur is their step-up opportunity. Igbo risk taking phenomenon can be viewed from the following outlines:

- i. Little or no phobia for death through high level of commitment
- ii. The choice of business with long term period of payback on investment capital
- iii. Optimism on future business growth and aversion of fear concerning business mortality.
- iv. Establishment of businesses in a harsh business environment
- v. Uncertainty about loss of capital if business process failed.
- vi. Loss of honour, prestige and paying job if the business failed
- vii. Impatience to invest without minding the future fall in the value of naira

The secret of this ethnic group in Nigeria is embedded in their ability to take risk and transform it into opportunities, and this has often led to their business success in the economy.

### IGBO BUSINESS SUCCESS ATTRIBUTES

The Igbos have recorded successes in their various ventures across Nigerian regions and borders in the recent time. Central to the attainment of these successes is the high level of solidarity amongst them, [13]. Some of the observed business success factors in the Igbo businesses are:

- i. Ability to cope in a dynamic environment
- ii. Ability to organize, reorganize and forecast
- iii. Ability to delegate responsibilities
- iv. Ability to utilize business opportunities
- v. Apprenticeship training
- vi. Energetic and hardworking spirit

- vii. Courage
- viii. Confidence
- ix. Critical thinking
- x. Curiosity to learn
- xi. Creative and innovative skill
- xii. Determination
- xiii. Independence
- xiv. Optimism
- xv. Perseverance
- xvi. Risk-transformation skill

### THE SCOPE OF IGBO ENTREPRENEURSHIP BUSINESS

The Igbo entrepreneurs have successfully established businesses that are not only bringing heavy returns on investment to them, but have also made life easy for the Nigerian people particularly in the areas of transportation, trading, electronics, and so on. Nworah [12] outlined some of the business areas where the Igbo Entrepreneurs have their ventures as follows:

- i. Transport business
- ii. Construction enterprise
- iii. Industry
  - Chemical industry
  - Pharmaceutical industry
  - Petrochemical industry
- iv. Real estate
- v. Commerce (import and export)
  - Trading
  - Food : Grocery, fast-food restaurant, specialty shop
  - Appliances: hardware and building materials
  - Clothing, [10]

### THE ROLES OF THE IGBO ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

It will be unnecessary to distinguish the roles of the Igbo entrepreneurship from the conventional roles of entrepreneurship around the globe, particularly in the development axis. Akanwa and Akpanabia [4] argued the roles of entrepreneurship in the development of any nations that it:

- i. Enhances job creation and reduce crime
- ii. Enhances Structural change in business and society
- iii. Embraces provision of resources to large firms
- iv. Prompts creation of new technology
- v. Bridges the gap between science and marketplace
- vi. Provides practical application for students

This paper outlined below few of the most appreciable Igbos entrepreneurship roles in Nigeria:

- i. Utilization of resources
- ii. Contribution to regional growth and development
- iii. Rural-Urban migration comfort ability through their transportation businesses
- iv. Increased standard of living.
- v. Reduction of unemployment
- vi. Contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

## CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURS IN NIGERIAN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Due to Nigerian political and economic voodoo, most entrepreneurs or would-be entrepreneurs, including the Igbo entrepreneurs face some challenges. These challenges are highlighted and briefly discussed below.

### i Financial Challenge

Fund accessibility obviously constitutes a confronting problem for translating business idea and plans in Nigeria business environment. Financial institutions in Nigeria either make funds unavailable for would-be entrepreneurs or scare them away by way of hiking the cost of capital. This cold attitude may be attributed to uncertainty concerning the future of businesses and its resultant bad debt from mortality. Some entrepreneurs have no property to mortgage, and therefore source for fund through:

- contributions from friends and family
- personal savings through paid jobs and/or gift
- loans from non-financial institutions (group local savings, cooperative society, etc.)
- deferred payment (debt owed to be paid later in the future)

### ii Power Supply Challenge

If an entrepreneur must operate a business in Nigeria without bottleneck, then he/she must devise means of generating a power supply. Most multi-national firms in Nigeria have mini power plants as an alternative to avoid the embarrassment of power failure that can hinder production process or service delivery. Small business firms with limited financial strength face dooms due to persistent failure of this power supply.

### iii Transportation Challenge

The major means of transportation in Nigeria are by road, sea, rail and air. Most firms restrict their business activities (of supplying raw materials and finished goods to their target market) to transportation by road within the locality due to its cheap nature. One militating factor against this choice of transportation is usually the condition of Nigerian roads. This poor road network has been problematic for the application of Just-In-Time delivery. This makes the intelligent entrepreneurs today to locate their business:

- near raw materials
- near producers and consumers market
- near labour market
- in the urban and not the rural settlement.

### iv. Security Challenge

In Nigeria today, insecurity is a critical bone of contention, and this creates tensions concerning the lives of businesses and business owners. But ample experiences of some entrepreneurs relocating their businesses have shown that not all the parts of the country are terrorized or violent-filled. Doing business in the northern Nigeria may be lucrative, but highly risky. Security challenges in Nigeria may span beyond terrorist activities and include:

- Financial insecurity (fraud perpetuated by hackers called **yahoo-yahoo** and by fraudsters called **419**)
- Robbery attacks
- Employee crime (arson, destruction of properties, etc.)

- Threat to life of entrepreneur
- The dark aspect of justice (in Nigeria, Justice is fair, but justice is as dark as charcoal)

### v. Government III-Support

Observably, the contributory negligence of the government concerning the growth of SMEs and the economy is on the high side. Little attention is often rapture with artificial lips, and there are almost daily commitment by the sweet words of the mouth concerning business well being in Nigeria. Funny enough, Nigeria most known footballers will always want to retire to politics and not to entrepreneurship. It is observed also that being a successful entrepreneur nationwide will premise on your ability to incorporate business with politics. SMEs face:

- High taxation
- Frivolous levies and duties
- Disturbance from government agencies (Corporate Affair Commission, Standard Organization of Nigeria, National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration Control, etc.)

### About The Igbo Entrepreneurs

Nigeria comprises of three major ethnic groups; Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. Igbos are regionalized in the East, Hausas in the North and Yorubas in the West. Of all these ethnic groups, Igbos are distinguished with a unique trait which can holistically serve as a solution tool for the dynamic economic situation of developing nations of the world. This set of people is cultured particularly in the area of business. There was a prior conception that most Igbo business veterans acquired their business skills from their past colonial masters. It was also argued that the post civil war placed an agony of survival before them, which forced the rich and prominent ones among them to conceive investment of their little money for returns. The Igbo culture taught the Igbos that no condition is permanent, [1]. No wonder the Igbos are self-contented and self-reliant. The Igbos of Nigeria are Africa's most energetic and most entrepreneurial people, [5]. In line with this, Olutayo [13] acknowledged that the Igbos, empirically, are very industrious and entrepreneurial, and this is obvious to other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the Igbos are risk-takers and intelligent entrepreneurs, who are committed in totality to economic activities as their lineage hobby. The Igbo entrepreneurs play inevitable roles that are capable of proliferating healthy state for the Nigerian economy for a distant time. In a nutshell, their entrepreneurial activities have indisputably dominated and are still dominating all sectors of the economy of Nigeria, and even across the border.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was a field survey base, and it included the use of both primary and secondary method of collecting reliable data and adequate information. The primary sources of data include the personal interview and questionnaire administered to the sampled area, and the secondary sources include textbooks, journals, newspapers and internet. The researchers systematically selected four metropolises (Sango-Ota, Ifo, Oshodi and Apapa) outside the Eastern part of the country in order to divorce the research from bias opinion. The population from which the sample size was designed is 2,210,305 (Oshodi-621,509; Apapa-522,384; Sango-Ota-527,242; Ifo- 539,170). For this study, the model developed by

Taro Yamane for determining sample size was also adopted, and Bowler's proportional allocation formula was adopted to determine the portions of questionnaires that are fair enough to be distributed to the selected metropolises in Lagos State- Oshodi and Apapa; and Ogun State- Sango-Ota and Ifo, Nigeria. To analyze the data gathered for this study, descriptive statistical tool, Likert Scale, percentages and table were used.

$$\text{Likert Scale Formula} = \frac{\sum FX}{N}$$

where  $\sum FX$  = weighted sum of frequencies and  $N$  = Total Response.

$$\text{Mean Point of Scale} = \frac{\sum X}{n}$$

where  $\sum X$  =sum of nominal value and  $N$  = Number of responses categories

Cut-off Point = Mean + e where e= error term i.e. 5% (0.05)

Taro Yamane formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where  $n$  = sample size;  $N$  = Population of the study; Error estimate at 5% (0.05); 1 = Constant. Bowler's Proportional Allocation formula

$$n_1 = \frac{n(n_1)}{N}$$

Where  $n$  = Overall sample size;  $n_1$  = Population of metropolises;  $N$  = The Total Population

**Table II Shows the Determination of Sample Size and Proportional Allocation of Questionnaires**

| Determination of Sample size   | Proportional Allocation  |
|--|--|
| $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ $n = \frac{2210305}{1 + 2210305(0.05)^2}$ $= \frac{2210305}{1 + 5525.76}$ $= \frac{2210305}{5526.76}$ = 399.9 = 400 approx. | $\text{Oshodi} = \frac{n(n_1)}{N}$ $= \frac{400(621,509)}{2210305}$ $= \frac{248603600}{2210305} = 112.47 = 112$ |
|  | $\text{Apapa} = \frac{400(522384)}{2210305}$ $= \frac{208953600}{2210305} = 94.536 = 95$                         |
|  | $\text{Sango} = \frac{400(527242)}{2210305}$ $= \frac{210896800}{2210305} = 95.4 = 95$                           |
|  | $\text{Ifo} = \frac{400(539170)}{2210305}$ $= \frac{215660000}{2210305} = 97.57 = 98$                            |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

**Table III Shows Portion of Questionnaires Allocated to Each Metropolis**

| S/N            | Metropolises | Portion Given |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| n <sub>1</sub> | Oshodi       | 112           |
| n <sub>2</sub> | Apapa        | 95            |
| n <sub>3</sub> | Sango-Ota    | 95            |
| n <sub>4</sub> | Ifo          | 98            |
|                |              | <b>400</b>    |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**Table IV Shows How Questionnaires are administered**

|                                    | Oshodi | Apapa | Sango-Ota | Ifo | Total | %   |
|------------------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|-----|-------|-----|
| <b>Questionnaires Administered</b> | 112    | 95    | 95        | 98  | 400   | 100 |
| <b>Questionnaires Returned</b>     | 107    | 86    | 94        | 93  | 380   | 95  |
| <b>Questionnaires Unreturned</b>   | 5      | 9     | 1         | 5   | 20    | 5   |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

The researchers administered the questionnaires with the help of research assistants across the selected metropolises in Lagos State- Oshodi and Apapa; and Ogun State- Sango-Ota and Ifo, Nigeria. The table IV shows that not all the

questionnaires were filled and returned. The total of 380 questionnaires (shodi-107; Apapa-86; Sango-Ota-94; Ifo-93) were filled and returned. The researchers therefore based analysis on the returned questionnaires.

**Table V Shows the Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents of The Selected Metropolises in Nigeria.**

| Demography                    | Responses  | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                 |            |                |
| Male                          | 117        | 30.8           |
| Female                        | 263        | 69.2           |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>380</b> | <b>100</b>     |
| <b>Academic Qualification</b> |            |                |
| Primary school certificate    | 93         | 24.5           |
| Secondary school certificate  | 81         | 21.3           |
| Diploma/ND Certificate        | 155        | 40.8           |
| HND/B.Sc                      | 16         | 4.2            |
| M.Sc and above                | 35         | 9.2            |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>380</b> | <b>100</b>     |
| <b>Age</b>                    |            |                |
| To 25 years                   | 106        | 27.9           |
| 26-35 years                   | 84         | 22.1           |
| 36-45 years                   | 80         | 21.1           |
| 46-55 years                   | 38         | 10             |
| More than 55 years            | 72         | 18.9           |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>380</b> | <b>100</b>     |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

From the **table v** above, it could be deduced that 117 respondents (30.8%) were male sex and 263 respondents (69.2%) were the female sex. Accordingly, 93 respondents (24.5%) were Primary School Certificate holders; 81 respondents (21.3%) were Secondary School Certificate holders; 155 respondents (40.8%) were Diploma/ND Certificate holders; 16 respondents (4.2%) were HND/B.Sc holders; and 35 respondents (9.2%) held M.Sc and above. Also, 106 respondents (27.9%) were up to 25 years of age; 84 respondents (22.1%) were 26 to 35 years; 80 respondents (21.1%) were 36 to 45 years; 38 respondents (10.0%) were 46 to 55 years; and 72 respondents (18.9%) were more than 55 years.

**Table VI Shows the Responses as to Whether the ITAS and Risk-Taking Spirit of the Igbos are the Major Factors of their Business Success.**

| Responses    | Frequency  |           |           |           | Tota       | Percentage  |
|--------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|
|              | Oshodi     | Apapa     | Sango     | Ifo       |            |             |
| Yes          | 83         | 47        | 74        | 63        | <b>267</b> | <b>70.3</b> |
| No           | 18         | 20        | 13        | 14        | <b>65</b>  | <b>17.1</b> |
| Not Sure     | 6          | 19        | 7         | 16        | <b>48</b>  | <b>12.6</b> |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>107</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>93</b> | <b>380</b> | <b>100</b>  |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

From the **table vi**, 267 respondents (70.3%) agreed that ITAS and risk-taking spirit are the major factors of their business success; 65 respondents (17.1%) disagreed; and 48 respondents (12.6%) are not really sure about that. With the highest percentage of respondents (70.3%), it will be necessary to agree that ITAS and the Igbo risk-taking spirit are crucial to their business success.

**Table VII Shows the Hypothesis Tested to Ascertain Whether the Igbo Entrepreneurship Activity is the Panacea for the Nigerian Economic Growth and Development.**

**H<sub>0</sub>**: That the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are not the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development

**H<sub>1</sub>**: That the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development

| Response                 | Frequency  |           |           |           |                | Scale/Rating (X) | FX          |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------------|-------------|
|                          | Oshodi     | Apapa     | Sango-Ota | Ifo       | Cumulative (F) |                  |             |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 36         | 48        | 39        | 64        | 187            | 5                | 935         |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 25         | 24        | 15        | 15        | 79             | 4                | 316         |
| <b>Undecided</b>         | 6          | 11        | 12        | 7         | 36             | 3                | 108         |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 27         | 1         | 14        | 5         | 47             | 2                | 94          |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 13         | 2         | 14        | 2         | 31             | 1                | 31          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>107</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>93</b> | <b>380</b>     | <b>15</b>        | <b>1484</b> |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

$$\text{Likert Scale Formula} = \frac{\sum FX}{N} = \frac{1484}{380} = 3.91$$

$$\text{Mean Point of Scale} = \frac{\sum X}{n} = \frac{15}{5} = 3.00$$

$$\text{Cut-off Point} = \text{Mean} + e = 3.00 + 0.05 = 3.05$$

**Decision**

From the Likert method used to determine whether the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development. The mean point of response was 3.91, while the cut-off was 3.05. The decision rule is that where the calculated mean point is above the cut-off point of 3.05, the statement is regarded as effective. Since the calculated mean point of 3.91 is greater than the cut-off point of 3.05 (mean point > cut-off point), we therefore conclude that the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings from this research can be categorized into findings from the data analyzed, interviews and observations.

**i. Findings from the data analyzed**

It was discovered that thousands of factors are responsible for the Igbo business success, out of which the Igbo Trade Apprenticeship System (ITAS) and high risk-taking spirit were isolated as the most paramount business success factors of the Igbo entrepreneurs. It was also discovered that Igbo entrepreneurial activities play pivotal roles in the Nigerian

economy. That is, the Igbos contribute significantly to the stable growth and development of the economy at large.

## ii. Findings from Interviews

It was discovered that the Igbo entrepreneurs treat business like a new born baby. Therefore, they give business ultimate support and protection, and cuddle it with all their lives. It was discovered that there is a legible cleavage between the Igbo businesses and their families. This implies that there is no cogent relationship between business and family. Therefore, business issues have no tangency with family issues. The research found that one of the strategies for the Igbo businesses is the return of earnings to the business to enhance expansion for a considerable period of time. The research also found that among the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Igbo entrepreneurs are most rated in terms of innovative skill, creativity and technological skill.

## iii. Findings from Observation

It was discovered that Igbo entrepreneurs behave rationally and conservatively. It was discovered that they submit in totality all that concerns them to their businesses. It was discovered that excellent customers' relation is another vibrant factor for their increasing market share in any competitive business environment. Finally, it was discovered that the Igbo entrepreneurs attached much risk to their business life.

## CONCLUSION

The Nigerian economic sectors have suffered inequality in respect of the ways in which government concerns are channeled towards a single end. Undoubtedly, the contributions of entrepreneurs towards the Nigerian economic life cycle are immeasurable. Igbos are people of the South-Eastern part of the country, who have demonstrated a distinguishing and unique trait among other ethnic groups. The Igbo entrepreneurship and business culture are essential drivers for the economy. The Igbo entrepreneurial activities in recent time have ear-marked commendable effort towards improving standard of living and reduction of unemployment from the rural to urban settings. Through judicious utilization of the scarce economic resources by the Igbos, Nigeria has recorded a fairly stable economic climate. Igbo entrepreneurial activities and business success have contributed immensely to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy. Therefore, the Igbo entrepreneurial activities are the panacea for the Nigerian economic growth and development.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, this paper therefore recommended that:

- i. Nigerians and people of other developing countries of the world should emulate the Igbo entrepreneurship culture.
- ii. The federal government should incorporate the **ITAS** as **Internship Training** in her entrepreneurship program in all universities in Nigeria.
- iii. Government policies on Small and medium scale enterprises should be reviewed in a way that paves a platform for other ethnic groups in the country to imbibe the Igbo business spirit.
- iv. Start up capital should be made available to the would-be entrepreneurs at low cost of acquisition.

- v. The Nigerian government should motivate the Igbo entrepreneurs through provision of business expansion fund.

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