

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF THE IGBO: A CULTURAL LEGACY FROM PRE-COLONIAL TIMES TO THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

Daniel Chukwuma Nzereogu, PhD

Department of History and International Studies

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

dc.nzereogu@unizik.edu.ng, danielnzereogu@gmail.com

Abstract

Culture is a people's way of life. It encompasses their worldviews, beliefs, and customs, which greatly influence and determine their decisions and actions. The culture of a people, therefore, affects how they view and live life. On the other hand, entrepreneurship is the process of extracting profits from new, unique, and valuable combinations of resources in an uncertain and ambiguous environment. The worldview and beliefs of the Igbo people incline them to always strive for expansion, regardless of how small their start-up may be. It can thus be asserted that the culture and worldview of the Igbo are entrepreneurial in nature. This study aims to highlight how this entrepreneurial culture has remained a consistent attribute of the Igbo people from generation to generation, spanning from the pre-colonial era to contemporary times. The objective is to analyze how this enduring identity has enabled the Igbo to survive and thrive amidst the various struggles and challenges they have faced throughout different epochs of their history. The study will also showcase the entrepreneurial achievements of a few notable Igbo entrepreneurs and examine the challenges they face within the context of Nigeria's political economy, as well as the efforts they are making to overcome them. Finally, the study will conclude with a few recommendations on how the entrepreneurial culture of the Igbo can be properly harnessed for the advancement and prosperity of the Nigerian economy.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Culture, Identity, Igbo, Economy

Introduction

Culture is a people's way of life. It has to do with a people's worldviews, beliefs and customs which influence and determine their decisions and actions. The culture of a people therefore affects their perception of life and shapes their identity as a people. On the other hand Entrepreneurship is the process of making gains from novel, distinctive areas as well as a quality arrangement of resources in an indefinite and vague environment. This has to do with the process in which the entrepreneur combines and manages other factors of production in order to thrive and maximize profit. In other words entrepreneurship relates to the capacity to task on ones survival instincts to eke-out a living from limited resources, maximizing profit and expanding the frontiers of an investment. Thus the worldviews and beliefs of the Igbo people is such that inclines them to always strive to expand irrespective of how little their start-up may be. So it can be asserted that entrepreneurship is a fundamental aspect of the Igbo culture. Consequently, Ogugua, (2003), states that Igbo people are exceptional in seeking after and running after opportunities so as to become active economic individuals regardless of the meager resources available to them. This shows their effort to gratify their inner desire to be truly Igbo and economic reliant personalities. Ogugua thus notes that to be truly Igbo is to belong by birth and action; to participate in Igbo beliefs, ceremonies and activities, and to feel at home in this universe. A major way through the Igbo feels at home and comfortable is by the accumulation of wealth and becoming economically relevant. Furthermore, Chinweuba and Ezeugwu (2017), posit that Igbo people all over work hard to transform economic resources that is available to them starting in a point of less production to a point of more production getting inspiration from the Igbo ideology which state thus- Onye ruo, O rie (if one works , he would eat). This so much reveals how the worldview of the Igbo impacts on their economic life and wellbeing.

A key component of an entrepreneurial mindset is the idea of having multiple streams of income, which is engaging in various sources of generating wealth. This idea is what is reflected in another Igbo philosophy of life expressed- Adighi ano otu ebe ekiri mmanwu (the masquerade is not viewed only from one spot). This philosophy is what has made Igbo people to be very industrious. They hardly rely on a single source for their sustenance. For the Igbo satisfaction is not just derived from earning income but from earning it through different sources at the same time, the quest would therefore be on how to find ways to keep multiplying the sources. Hence this tendency makes the Igbo to be hard working, deriving strength from another Igbo philosophy of life which states that- Aka aja aja n'ebute onu mmanu mmanu (hard work yields wealth). These worldviews and beliefs thus keep them moving even in the midst of harsh environments and difficult moments with the hope that it would get better as they persist in hard work. Anyanwu (1999) observes that the Igbo people, to a great extent, have refrained from relying heavily on the government for support. Instead, they work towards self-reliance and even make meaningful

contributions to Nigeria's economy, despite receiving the lowest—and even decreasing—allocations from the federal government. This is especially evident in Nnewi, a prominent entrepreneurial and industrial city in Igboland, where all the industries are owned by private individuals with virtually no support from the government. Clearly, the Igbo people regard purposeful hard work and personal effort as essential means of survival. As a result, there is a strong inclination among individuals to start and grow their own enterprises, reflecting their deeply rooted entrepreneurial tendencies. This drive is embedded in their worldview and cultural values, which are instilled from an early age to inspire and motivate success in business and enterprise.

Aspects of the Igbo Entrepreneurial Worldview /Culture

There are common Igbo parlance that explains their worldview

- ***Nwata kwochaa aka, osoro okenye rie nri*** (A child that washes his hands dines with the Elders)- This is a motivating factor why an average Igbo man would work extremely hard to make wealth so as to be counted among the greats in the community/society. He has a strong desire to be economically relevant. According to Uchehara (2009), a significant part of the worldview and culture of the Igbo is praise and recognition for well earned wealth. Indeed, the Igbo see wealth as a way of advancing their social prestige and attaining social befitting status. Based on this worldview, the traditional Igbo people display the vastness of their lands, large farms and abundant harvests, their large compounds noticeable by many houses and peopled by wives, offspring and dependants which are the evidence of their entrepreneurial strides. This fetches them accolades and titles from the society such as *Ozo*, *Oba*, *Ichie*, *Ochiliozuo*, *Osirioha*, *Ogbuehi*, and so on. By this, one is deemed fit to attain the social rank in Igbo context based on his large wealth and philanthropic deeds felt by the community. It is thus pertinent to note that this tradition works as a motivation for focused entrepreneurship among the Igbo. Hence for the Igbo, success in ones area of endeavor is not negotiable. All these therefore portray how the Igbo culture and worldview impacts on the entrepreneurial mindset of the Igbo people, shaping their identity as a people over the years.
- ***Onye ruo, O rie*** (If one works, he would eat)- This Igbo worldview encourages hard work in order to earn a living. An average Igbo person works hard. The inner essence of the Igbo culture abhors laziness and indolence. Hence according to the Igbo culture and beliefs one qualifies and is entitled to eat and enjoy the goodies of life only when he/she has worked for it. Therefore the Igbo culture adores and celebrates work because it is seen as a pathway to a good life, highlighting idleness as a pathway to poverty and hunger. Thus the Igbo worldview of *onye ruo*, *O rie* portrays the entrepreneurial mindset of the Igbo people which is enshrined in their culture and worldview.
- ***Ahia oma n'ere onwe ya*** (An excellent product markets itself)- This Igbo world view encourages excellent performance. The entrepreneurial strides of the Igbo people are seen in their trading capacities which involve a whole lot of marketing efforts. They therefore believe that if a lot of energy is channeled in making a product an excellent one marketing it would be a lot easier. This worldview hence motivates an average Igbo person to pursue excellence in all their enterprise, thereby ensuring that they achieve entrepreneurial success.
- ***E jighi ututu ama njo ahia*** (Bad business is not ascertained in the morning)- This Igbo world view encourages resilience and perseverance in the face of initial failures in business. The Igbo are predominantly business people and the business world is full of uncertainties, thus with resilience and perseverance which this common Igbo parlance projects an average Igbo business person as demoralizing as it can be, is not most likely to give up when he/she experiences initial struggles and failures in business. This attitude has therefore enabled them to persevere in business till they make it even in the highly uncertain business terrain which exists in Nigeria. Hence it has to be noted that resilience which is an integral part of the Igbo world view and culture is greatly linked with their entrepreneurial efforts.

Research Method

The research method which this study employs is the ethnographic research method. Ethnographic research method is a research approach where a researcher looks at a people in their cultural setting, with the goal of producing a narrative account of that particular culture. Hence this study which is focusing on the entrepreneurial culture of the Igbo people and how it has impacted on their entrepreneurial success has employed the ethnographic research method to explain the Igbo cultural setting and worldviews and to also narrate an account of their giant strides in the world of business. Thus as part of the ethnographic research method the researcher looks at the deeds done as well as words used and how they interact with one another as well as with their social and cultural environment.

Furthermore, there was a descriptive analysis of data drawn from related published works, as well as oral interviews to further deepen the research. Also, to achieve objectivity, the study uses discrete method of analysis for the materials interrogated.

Objectives of the study

This work, therefore, has the following objectives:

1. To highlight how the entrepreneurial culture of the Igbo has remained a consistent attribute from generation to generation, spanning from the pre-colonial era to contemporary times.
2. To examine how this enduring identity has enabled the Igbo people to survive and thrive amidst the various struggles and challenges they have faced.
3. To showcase the entrepreneurial achievements of selected Igbo entrepreneurs, analyze the challenges they face within the context of Nigeria's political economy, and explore the efforts they are making to overcome them.

Literature Review

According to Morrison, Rimmington, and Williams (1999), culture substantially determines the attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Culture encompasses motives that initiate and trigger entrepreneurship. Marysol, Rosa and Alexander (2017) noted that the cultural dimensions traditionally related to entrepreneurial activity and entrepreneurship include power distance and institutional collectivism. Power Distance is defined as the degree to which members of a society expect the power to be shared unequally. Mitchell, Smith, Sewright, and Morse (2000), suggested that a high power distance has a negative effect on business creation processes. According to Shane (1993), this argument is based on the fact that in these societies, individuals of lower social class may consider entrepreneurship as a unique process for individuals of high social class, as the latter would have the necessary resources at their disposal and experience required as a result. In this way, a high proportion of population outside this small group could fail to carry out entrepreneurship in the exercise of assessment of opportunities within the context. Kreiser, Marino, Dickson and Weaver (2010) posited that previous research found that entrepreneurs in cultures with low power distance will have more autonomy and negotiate with less hierarchical bureaucracy, so they are more involved in the behavior of taking risks than those in cultures with high power distance. On the other hand Aldrich and Wiedenmayer (1993), highlighted that Institutional collectivism reflects the degree to which individuals are encouraged by social institutions to integrate into groups within organizations and society. In this sense, Manolova, Eunni, and Gyoshev (2008) posited that societies that value entrepreneurship and innovation introduce an efficient institutional system to promote innovative companies. In Igbo societies there is low power distance as the degree to which members of the Igbo society expect power to be shared unequally is low. This is because the Igbo people are highly independent - minded people and are given to pursuing personal interests and, therefore, would not subscribe to inequality in power sharing, thus leading to a state of balance of power which is reflected in their belief as portrayed in the saying- "Igbo enweeze" (Igbo has no King/every man is a king onto himself). Hence this culture of balance of power among the Igbo people has created an economic environment among them whereby every Igbo strives for economic relevance and personal profit, thereby breeding entrepreneurship in the economic system of the Igbo.

Furthermore, highlighting culture as one of the entrepreneurial drivers among the Igbos Mbaegbu and Ekienabor (2018), noted individualism as an aspect of the Igbo culture stating that with a background of hard environment the Igbo has to secure him first before becoming his brothers' keeper. It is this culture of personal interest first that helps him nurture his business from a micro and humble beginning to a Small or Medium Enterprise (SME) and lastly to a large enterprise. Secondly, seeing that there may be no help coming from elsewhere the Igbo develops internal locus of control that makes him daring and achievement oriented. But he further highlighted that although they are basically individualistic, they have collectively also developed a culture that is based on Kinship networking (or *Umunna*) in order to survive. Again Onwuejeogwu (2010), posited that part of the Igbo culture is their mentorship culture he demonstrated it by stating how the influence of the extended family system (*Umunna*) is used in entrepreneurship training among the Igbo whereby a successful entrepreneur picks up a nephew or a young cousin and puts him under internship in his own line of business for some years until he is able to freelance on his own with the seed or endowment capital the "Master" will give him. While on his own the young fellow also tries to mentor another relation and the group develops entrepreneurially. Thus it is crystal clear that entrepreneurship is embedded in the culture fiber of the Igbo people.

The Entrepreneurial culture an unchanging attribute of the Igbo

Indeed, Igboland is an example of a successful adaptation to the tropical rain forest environment of West Africa. Their history and economic system can be studied under three major heads namely – agriculture, trade and manufacture. Each of these three main categories of economic activity played an important part in the survival of

the Igbo as a group and in determining the character and quality of their entrepreneurial culture, -this is in line with Marx's historical materialism which postulates that the economic structure is what determines the superstructure in the society. This view is properly captured in Bottomore (1983) where it highlights that Marx contends that the economic structure of society, constituted by its relations of production, is the real foundation of society. This line of thought is what is evidently seen in the entrepreneurial nature of the Igbo culture, as their quest for economic survival has to a great extent influenced their world views, belief system and way of life. A vivid illustration of the entrepreneurial tendency that is associated with the Igbo way of life is seen in how the pre-colonial Igbo economy met the labour demands of agriculture. The Igbo society placed a high premium on hard work and so not only valued the hard worker but held him up for admiration. Thus Igbo society was one in which every able-bodied person was actively engaged in farm work. The result was that most people, male and female, did their own farm work. In areas where the land was first tilled before yam mounds were made, that was done by both men and women. The man sowed the seed yams in the mounds, while the women planted the maize and beans in the spaces between the mounds. The man cut the sticks and tended the yam vines, while the women did the weeding and the planting of cassava. Though cocoyams could be planted at the base of the yam mounds, for the most part they were planted separately and this was largely a woman's job. But this is not to say the men would not help their wives in this if they could find the time and the relationship was good. It was largely because each family did its own farm work for itself, that the Igbo came to value large families. A man who wanted to prosper as a farmer had to have many wives and children. But a man could never do all his farm work depending on his wives and children alone. Most families, especially successful families, would normally have large retinues of slaves who helped with farm work. But it is important to note that slave labour merely supplemented rather than supplanted the labour of the freeborn. This highlights the fact that peasant agriculture in Igboland even at that period largely depends on what the Russian agronomist, Chayanov called self-exploitation, that is it did not involve wage labour but the unpaid labour of farm owners and their families, thus highlighting the inclination for self-reliance by the Igbos, which is an important aspect of entrepreneurship.

The Igbo people also displayed their entrepreneurial abilities through trading during the pre-colonial era. One of the ways they achieved this by harnessing the resources within their environment and trading with them with their neighbours. According to Afigbo (1981), there was long-range exchange of the natural resources with which the different parts of Igboland were differently endowed. The Northern Igbo plateau was and is rich in iron Ore deposits and in smelters and smiths who transformed the Ore into iron, tools and ritual objects. The Niger-Anambra Valley produced fish, while the North-Eastern and Cross River Igbo areas were endowed with salt lakes at Uburu, lead at Abakaliki and fish from the Cross River, hence these resources harnessed from their immediate environment became for them items of trade.

Another important sector of pre-colonial Igbo economy is manufacture, which was another avenue through which they displayed their entrepreneurial abilities. The Igbo manufactured a wide range of items which include – agricultural tools, war implements, various kinds of baskets, cloths, earthen jars, household furniture and so on. Some of the crafts which produced these wares could be and were practiced by anybody but some were practiced only by select communities, either because only they had the necessary raw materials or because the crafts demanded more time than could be combined with full scale farming. But by and large it could be said that no reign of Igboland lacked specialists in at least one particular craft. Pottery, for instance, was carried on wherever the necessary clay could be found. Such places included – Inyi, Ishiagu, and Ibeku, but apart from these, there were innumerable other little communities which met local needs in pottery in areas far away from the famous centres. Smithery, salt manufacture, cloth weaving and carving were among the best developed of Igbo industries. Of all Igbo communities which engaged in smithery, the most famed and the best organized were the Awka, Nkwerre and Abiriba. All these go to show that the zest for entrepreneurship has been long entrenched within the way of life of the Igbos even before the dawn of colonialism.

During the colonial era the Igbo enhanced the colonial economy using their entrepreneurial abilities. This is seen in the way the palm produce which is a natural product of their environment, was exploited to enhance the colonial economy. It is important to note that palm products were the essential products in the colonial economy in Igboland. Palm trees grow wild in Igboland, and for over a century Europeans got palm products especially palm oil predominantly from Igboland. The gradual growth of a money economy and increased overseas demand enhanced the economic importance of palm products, and so the Igbo farmers evolved a system with the minimum labour cost to make the most out of the business.

With the exit of the colonial government and the consequent independence of Nigeria in 1960, the economy of Igboland came under direct control of the Nigerian government. But the Nigerian government since 1960 had performed poorly in the management of the Nigerian economy in general and particularly the economic potentials

of Igboland which has become a part of Nigerian economy by the making of the colonial masters. Nevertheless, despite the harsh economic environment, the Igbo through their entrepreneurial abilities have tried to scale all the hurdles to achieve success. It is on record that the first indigenous car manufacturing plant in Nigeria is owned by Innoson group located in Nnewi in Igboland, while the first wholly made in Nigeria motorcycle was manufactured in the same town of Nnewi by the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASeni) located in Igboland.

Thus it has to be noted that these entrepreneurial strides by the Igbo people during the different epochs of their history is not just by happenstance but a product of their world views, belief systems and way of life. The Igbo culture is progressive in nature and is such that believe that no matter the prevailing limitations that one faces he can still device means to make progress regardless.

Surviving through the odds

Before the colonial era, business transactions were carried out across the various ethnic groups and regions in Nigeria. The various trade routes dotting the landscapes of all the regions in Nigeria testify to the existence of these inter-ethnic business transactions and co-operations. These trade routes provided the links for these business transactions and economic co-operations. This cross-regional business linkage continued during the colonial period, although the article of trade encouraged was agricultural products. One of the factors that made this possible was the existence of enabling political environment. The Igbo people, being people that have knack for business was one of the major ethnic groups that took advantage of this trade equanimity. They established businesses across the country. One factor that even intensified the establishment of businesses across regions was the development of transport infrastructure during the colonial era which made inter-regional movements much easier. The political environment was also business friendly across the regions irrespective of the ethnic extraction of the merchants. Even after independence up to 1966, before the crisis in northern Nigeria and the civil war that followed, the political environment in the country was such that encouraged everyone especially the Igbo to move around freely in pursuit of their business and economic enterprise in the different parts of the Nigeria without fear of molestation and attack. Onumonu and Anutanwa (2017), have argued that the political and economic environment of the immediate post-independent era was business friendly for business men from all regions of the country. This argument was impliedly made when they noted that the political independence of Nigeria in 1960 came with much hope, promises and ultimately economic prosperity which gave a good number of people confidence to invest across the nation of Nigeria, without an iota of fear. For instance, in Kano State, the place known as Sabon Gari became so to say an Igbo area where the Igbo people felt comfortable and did their business without fear or molestation. They took advantage of the opportunity and established their business empire all over Nigeria.

At the end of the Civil war in January 1970 the Igbo suffered a lot of losses which led to a massive economic set back, as they lost all their investments all over Nigeria. General Yakubu Gowon declared that there was “no victor no vanquished” but later it was discovered that there was a victor and a vanquished. Igbo economy was in shambles and the people were devastated. The civil war adversely affected various sectors of life of the Igbo especially in production, trade, industry, infrastructural facilities etc. The war affected general agriculture especially food production, places and areas known for food crop production before the war were either abandoned by the people as the war raged or occupied as warfront by the fighting soldiers. Farm settlements, palm and rubber plantations were either abandoned or destroyed. Palm oil and kernel production which gave the Igbo prominence in the economic scheme of Nigeria fell below expectation. Livestock farming almost disappeared. Food production dropped sharply and hunger was on the increase. Some big markets centres in Igboland were destroyed to a large extent. Very active commercial cities like Aba, Onitsha, Enugu, Umuahia etc were left in ruins by war planes and fighting land army. The raiding activities reduced to its minimum as a result of poor number of able bodied men engaged in the activities. A good number of them had died or have been maimed during the war leaving the scene for mostly women, boys and girls. Long distance trade through transport was not effective as there were not enough commercial vehicles to serve the purpose. Many prominent industries and factories were destroyed by the war. Some others were abandoned and the machines were either looted or left to waste in rust. Production of goods in the sector stopped and the personnel lost their jobs.

Indeed the civil war adversely affected the Igbo in almost every aspect of life. However, rather than deadening their vision and psyche, it reawakened the people’s economic interest and did nothing to their drive, hard work, enterprise, resilience, dynamism, versatility and will.

Over the past decades the Igbo people have been able to survive the adversity and are even thriving in spite of the odds. There are three factors responsible for their thriving in spite of the adversity they went through. They include their entrepreneurial abilities, their cultural disposition and the apprenticeship system.

Researchers in the area of entrepreneurship had outlined certain features so as to explain the entity referred to as the entrepreneur. Such concepts discovered among entrepreneurs include- fundamental change, innovation, flexible, dynamic risk taking, creative, alertness, need for achievement, ambition (Kaufmann & Dant 1998). Kaufmann and Dant further noted other traits like leadership, self-motivation, and the aptitude to resolve crisis. They stated that entrepreneurs are leaders and major contributors to the process of creative destruction. An entrepreneur is an individual who undertakes uncertain investments and has an extremely low level of uncertainty aversion, (Kaufmann & Dant 1998). Regarding industrial development in Igboland which is championed by the entrepreneurial minded people in places such as Nnewi, these entrepreneurial traits are quite obvious. Such traits as flexibility was demonstrated by the Nnewi people after the Nigeria-Biafran war when all their investments in different areas in Nigeria were completely destroyed, they were flexible enough to adjust and adapt to the change of circumstances (which is another personality trait of an entrepreneur) in the country as at that time by staying back in Nnewi re-establishing their businesses there. Innovation, creativity and ambition were other entrepreneurial traits exhibited by Innocent Chukwuma, the owner and manufacturer of Innoson Motors. These traits enabled him to be dynamic in risk taking by venturing into an area where no African had ventured before, which is the manufacturing of vehicles from start to finish on African soil. Innocent Chukwuma as well displayed entrepreneurial leadership and engaged in the process of creative destruction when he decided to cease from the importation of full motorcycles but rather to dismantle them and only import the metallic components while he then produces the plastic components of the motorcycles here in Nigeria, (Innocent Chukwuma, 2018: Personal Communication) . Kaufmann and Dant state that an entrepreneur is an individual who undertakes uncertain investments and has an extremely low level of uncertainty aversion. This attribute is mostly demonstrated by Nnewi entrepreneurs who in spite of the difficult business environment they find themselves in are still thriving. Quite a number of business enterprises have been established and are still being established in Nnewi, they still find a way to remain afloat in business in spite of little or no incentives from the government. Persons like Chika Okafor and Cletus Ibeto owners of Chicason Group of Companies and Ibeto Group of Companies respectively are still thriving in their businesses as they run different companies that are into the manufacture of different goods ranging from oil and gas, motorcycle and motor spare parts, batteries as well as agro and allied products.

The apprenticeship system in Igboland is a mechanism by which wealth is transferred and sustained from one generation to another through a mentorship process. It is actually a dual sided process; the apprentice is mentored and trained in the art and science of the trade/business by his master while the master would be assisted in his business by the apprentice who at some point begins to stand in, in the absence of his master. Normal age range for leaving the home for apprenticeship is mostly between the ages of 7 and 10. This is because within this age range it is easier to control and mould them, thus beyond this age range the possibility of being taken on apprenticeship begins to reduce. The years of mentorship ranges between 10 to 15 years depending on what the agreement was between the parents and the master. Through this system young entrepreneurs are empowered and established in business, thereby boosting the general economic wellbeing of the Igbo people. Thus after the massive losses incurred during the civil war the entrepreneurial spirit and culture of the Igbo people has been an important factor in their economic survival

Achievements of some Igbo Entrepreneurs

Okeke, (2018), states that the achievements of Igbo industrialists and manufacturers are quite enormous and plenty. He notes that most of the development efforts and infrastructures in Igboland today were put in place by these industrialists. He points out that there is quite a little that the government has done to help over the years. Hence, these industrialists in order to bring about a conducive milieu so that their industries can function and prosper had made effort to provide some key infrastructures for themselves and for their immediate community. Things like access roads, pipe borne water, electric poles and transformers are most of the time provided by these industrialists in Nnewi.

According to Ilechukwu (2018), so much has been achieved by the Igbo people in terms of industrial development. He noted that a case in point is Chief Innocent Chukwuma owner of Innoson Nigeria Limited who is the first manufacturer to produce a complete vehicle from start to finish here in Nigeria right there in Nnewi. He stated that this indeed is a major achievement by an Nnewi industrialist and an important contribution to the industrial development of the city of Nnewi and Nigeria at large. Another example is Chief Dr. Alex Chika Okafor owner of Chicason Group who has made tremendous breakthrough in business and industry. He is the producer of A-Z engine oil, life vegetable oil and various other products like chicken feeds, soaps and cosmetics. Ibeto Group

owned by Chief Cletus Ibeto is another Nnewi industrialist that has made tremendous progress, his union auto parts manufacturing Ltd is the largest manufacturer of batteries and automotive spare parts in Nigeria. He is as well the producer of Ibeto cements and Ibeto engine oil. The Groups interests have also expanded into other areas like energy, hospitality and real state. Another manufacturer is Chief Obiajulu Uzodike owner of Cutix plc which manufactures electric cables and wires. There is also Chief Louis Onwugbenu owner of Louis Carter Group which produces and sales food condiments, plastics inventions including plastic upholsteries, other plastic utensils and so on. Also there is Chief Innocent Okafor owner of Cento Group of companies which produces and sales vehicle and motorcycle parts, batteries as well as sacks. There is as well First Express aluminum Co. Ltd which produces aluminum materials. Also there is Sir D.C. Ofordeme owner of Uru industries limited which is an Agro chemical industry with services in the manufacturing of fertilizers and other chemical supplement for agricultural purposes. All these manufacturers are all Igbo people manufacturing and producing in Igboland making the area a huge industrial hub, as there are many other manufacturers doing exploits in Igboland.

Conclusion

The culture and worldview of the Igbo people incline them to continually strive for expansion, regardless of how small their start-up may be. Igbo people across various regions work diligently to transform the economic resources available to them, progressing from a point of low productivity to higher levels of production. They are exceptional in identifying and pursuing opportunities, striving to become active economic participants despite the limited resources at their disposal. These efforts reflect a deep-seated drive to fulfill their identity as self-reliant and industrious individuals. It can therefore be asserted that the culture and worldview of the Igbo are inherently entrepreneurial, making entrepreneurship not just a practice, but a core part of Igbo culture and identity.

References

- Afigbo, A.E., (1981). *Ropes of sand*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Aldrich, H.E. & Wiedenmayer, G. (1993). From Traits To Rates: An Ecological Perspective on Organizational and Inclusive Development. *Advances In Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence, and Growth*, 145-195.
- Anyanwu, U. (1999). The Igbo-Yoruba relations and the problems of national integration in Nigeria. *Nsukka Journal of Humanities, Vol.10*, pp.23 -41
- Bottomore, T. (1983). *A dictionary of marxist thought*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Chinweuba, G. E. and Ezeugwu, E. C. (2017). The ontological foundation of Igbo entrepreneurship: an analytical investigation. *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion, Vol.33*, pp. 17-23
- Chukwuma Innocent, (2018). Personal Communication
- Ilechukwu Cosmas, (2018). Personal Communication
- Kaufmann, P. J. and Dant, R. P. (1998). Franchising and the domain of entrepreneurship research. *Journal of Business Venturing, Vol. 14*, pp.58-70
- Kreiser, P.M., Marino, L.D., Dickson, P. & Weaver, K. M. (2010). Cultural Influences on Entrepreneurial Orientation: The Impact of National Culture on risk Taking and Proactiveness In SMEs. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 34(5), 959-983.
- Manolova, T. S., Eunni, R. & Gyoshev, B. S. (2008). Institutional Environments for Entrepreneurship: Evidence from Emerging Economies In Eastern Europe. *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 32(1), 203-218.
- Marysol, C., Rosa, B., Alexander, Z. (2017). The Relationship between Culture and Entrepreneurship. *Espacios*. Vol. 38 (N° 34) Page 12
- Mbaegbu, D. & Ekienabor, E. (2018). The Drivers of Entrepreneurship among the Igbos of the South Eastern Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Studies In Economics And Public Sector Management. Volume 6, Number 1*, 49-62.
- Mitchell, R. K., Smith, B., Sewright, K. W. & Morse, E. A. (2000). Cross-Cultural Cognitions and the Venture Creation Decision. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(5), 974-993.
- Morrison, A. J., Rimmington, M. & Williams, C. (1999). *Entrepreneurship In The Hospitality, Tourism And Leisure Industries*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann
- Ogugua, P. (2003). *Septenary nature of Igbo cultural values: a hermeneutical approach*. Awka: Double Pee Communications
- Okeke Francis, (2018). Personal Communication
- Onumonu, U.P. and Anutanwa, P.O. (2017). Rethinking the Impact of Nigerian Civil War: Commerce in the Post- Civil War Nnewi and its Challenges, 1970-2000 in *Mgbakoigba*, Journal of African Studies. Vol.6 No.2. 155-16
- Onwuegeogwu, M. A. (2010). *The Social Anthropology of Africa: An Introduction*. Ibadan: Heinemann (Nig) Plc.
- Shane, S. (1993). Cultural Influences On National Rates of Innovation. *Journal of Business venturing*, 8(1), 59-73.
- Uchegara, F.O. (2009). *Integrated approach to entrepreneurship studies*. Onitsha: Feros Prints & Co. Ltd