

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURIAL GRIT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ADAPTED IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

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Abstract

This study investigated the nexus between female entrepreneurial grit and social capital within the adapted framework of the "Igbo Apprenticeship System" in South-East Nigeria. While the traditional apprenticeship model is historically patriarchal, this research explored how women utilize internal psychological resources, specifically extraversion, perseverance of effort, and leadership autonomy, to cultivate the social networks and "trust currency" necessary for business success in a male-dominated trade ecosystem. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. Targeting the population of female traders, a sample size of 384 was determined, resulting in 284 valid responses from major commercial hubs in Onitsha, Aba, and Nnewi. Data were analyzed using Descriptive Statistics and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that all three dimensions of grit significantly and positively influence social capital accumulation. Perseverance of Effort emerged as the strongest predictor, indicating that long-term tenacity is the primary driver of trust and credit access. Extraversion facilitated "social bridging," while Leadership Autonomy empowered women to bypass traditional hierarchies. The study suggests that for female entrepreneurs in the South-East, personality traits are strategic business assets. Policymakers and NGOs should shift focus from purely technical training to "soft power" development, such as networking resilience and psychological grit. Recognizing these informal trust-based networks could provide a more effective pathway for integrating female-led enterprises into formal credit systems and regional economic development frameworks.

Keywords: female entrepreneurship, Igbo apprenticeship system, entrepreneurial grit, social capital, South-east Nigeria

1. Introduction

The economic landscape of South-East Nigeria is anchored by a unique socio-cultural institution known as the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS), or *Igba-Boi* (Ezeajughu, 2021; Chinweuba & Ezeugwu, 2017; Ezeajughu, 2021). Historically hailed as the world's most successful grassroots business incubator, the IAS has traditionally been a patriarchal pipeline, transitioning young men into successful merchants through years of mentored service and eventual "settlement" (Aniagolu et al., 2025; Omede & Nte, 2023; Iwara et al., 2022). However, in the face of modern economic shifts, South-Eastern women are increasingly bypassing traditional exclusions by adapting this

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system into a "female-centric" model of apprenticeship (Abasilim et al, 2024; Akanji et al., 2023).

This evolution is deeply rooted in the concept of Social Capital, the communal trust, networks, and reciprocity (Malaku & Botha, 2025), that serve as the primary currency in Igbo trade. For the female entrepreneur, navigating this space is not merely a matter of financial investment but an exercise in Entrepreneurial Grit (Adeola et al., 2020). This involves a psychological and behavioral tenacity used to penetrate "old boy" networks and convert informal associations into sustainable business equity (Nightingale, 2023). While the traditional IAS relies on formal lineage, the female adaptation relies on the individual's ability to leverage her personality and persistence to build a seat at the table.

Despite the resilience of these women, a critical gap persists in entrepreneurial literature. Most studies on the *Igba-Boi* system remain gender-blind, focusing almost exclusively on male-led success stories while ignoring the nuanced ways women cultivate social capital in a culturally restrictive environment. The problem lies in the "institutional void" where formal banking and mentorship programs often fail women, forcing them to rely on their own psychological resources, specifically grit, to bridge the gap (Ukwu et al., 2023).

Without an empirical understanding of how specific dimensions of grit, such as Extraversion, Perseverance of Effort, and Leadership Autonomy, translate into actual social capital, policymakers and scholars remain unable to provide the targeted support necessary to scale female-led enterprises in the region. Consequently, the female adaptation of the apprenticeship system remains undervalued and under-theorized, leaving a significant portion of the South-East's economic engine in the shadows of academic discourse.

The main objective of this study is to empirically analyze the relationship between female entrepreneurial grit and the accumulation of social capital among women adapting the apprenticeship system in South-East Nigeria. To achieve this, the study pursues three specific objectives:

1. To examine how Extraversion enables female entrepreneurs to proactively bridge social gaps and initiate mentorship networks.
2. To evaluate the impact of Perseverance of Effort on the long-term sustainability of the social trust required to maintain trade relations.
3. To determine the extent to which Leadership Autonomy influences a woman's ability to manage and command her own social networks independent of traditional male-dominated structures.

By treating social capital as a unidimensional outcome, this research seeks to demonstrate that the quality of a woman's business network is a direct function of her internal psychological drive and adaptability.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to "humanize" the data surrounding African indigenous business models. For academics, it provides a fresh, gender-inclusive perspective on the IAS, expanding the boundaries of grit theory beyond Western contexts into the vibrant markets of Nigeria. For policymakers, the findings offer a roadmap for creating gender-sensitive interventions that recognize the informal social networks women already use to survive and thrive.

Ultimately, this research empowers the female entrepreneur by validating her lived experience, proving that her "grit": her talk, her sweat, and her independence, is not just a survival mechanism, but a sophisticated strategic tool for economic transformation. By documenting these adaptations, the study contributes to a more

equitable narrative of the Igbo entrepreneurial spirit, ensuring that the future of *Igbo-Boi* is as inclusive as it is prosperous.

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification

To understand the mechanics of female enterprise in South-East Nigeria, one must clarify the interplay between psychological traits and cultural institutions. Female Entrepreneurial Grit is defined here as a non-cognitive trait characterized by a steadfast passion and "stamina" to achieve long-term goals despite the socio-cultural hurdles inherent in the Igbo trade ecosystem (Emeh, 2025; Aniagolu et al., 2025). Unlike general resilience, grit involves a "marathon" mindset.

Operationalization of Variables

In this study, grit is disaggregated into three dimensions, operationalized through the Grit Scale (Short) and adapted for the entrepreneurial context. These three dimensions include Extraversion-Measured by the sociability and assertiveness required to initiate business ties in crowded marketplaces; Perseverance of Effort-Operationalized as the tireless work ethic needed to overcome the "double burden" of domestic and professional roles, reflecting long-term consistency in pursuit of business goals; and Leadership Autonomy-The drive for self-governance and independent decision-making, allowing women to pivot away from restrictive traditional hierarchies. Social Capital, the dependent variable, is operationalized as a unidimensional construct representing "character currency." It is measured by the level of relational trust and network intensity that facilitates access to inventory financing and credit without formal collateral.

Comparative Global Perspectives

The Adapted Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) reflects a global phenomenon where indigenous communities use informal learning to bypass formal economic barriers. Similar to the *Igbo-Boi* system, indigenous apprenticeship models in Latin America (e.g., the *Ayni* system in the Andes) and South Asia (e.g., the *Karkhana* system in India) rely on kinship and communal trust. However, while Latin American models often focus on collective agricultural sustainability, the IAS is uniquely aggressive in its commercial expansion. Like the "Bazaar" networks in East Asia, the female adaptation of IAS replaces rigid "master-servant" contracts with fluid, "sisterhood" networks and trade associations (Kingsly, 2024; Abasilim et al., 2024).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories namely Social Capital Theory (SCD) and Feminist Entrepreneurship Theory.

Social Capital Theory (SCD)

The Theory was originally popularized by Pierre Bourdieu and later refined by Robert Putnam. The theory posits that social networks have value, and the "connections" within these networks serve as a resource that individuals can tap into for economic gain. In the context of South-East Nigeria, the theory explains how "bonding capital" (ties within family) and "bridging capital" (ties across different social groups) facilitate market entry.

Complementing this is the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Theory, which suggests that internal traits like grit are "malleable states" that drive performance. For the Igbo woman, Social Capital Theory provides the "where" (the network), while Grit/PsyCap explains the "how" (the internal drive to build that network). By integrating these theories, we argue that social capital does not exist in a vacuum; it

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must be "earned" through the persistent application of grit. A woman's ability to extract value from the Igbo apprenticeship framework depends on her psychological capacity to build trust, endure hardship, and assert her leadership within that network.

Feminist Entrepreneurship Theory

This Theory argues that women's business activities are not just economic but are acts of resistance against patriarchal structures. By utilizing "soft power" and psychological grit, women redefine the boundaries of a male-dominated trade ecosystem. Furthermore, Institutional Gender Theory explains how informal rules (norms and traditions) often disadvantage women, forcing them to develop higher levels of grit to navigate the "institutional voids" where formal banking and legal protections are absent. In the markets of Onitsha or Aba, these women do not just "fit into" the system; they create a parallel institutional framework built on trust and shared identity (Irene et al., 2024).

Hypotheses Development

Extraversion and Social Capital

The personality trait of extraversion, characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and high energy, serves as a vital psychological asset for female entrepreneurs (Kusumawijaya & Dwi-Astuti, 2021), navigating the high-context business environment of South-East Nigeria. In the densely populated "Main Markets" of cities like Onitsha and Aba, business transactions are deeply embedded in social interactions rather than purely formal contracts.

Extraverted women possess a natural inclination for "market talk," which allows them to bypass traditional gender-based barriers in male-dominated trade associations. By proactively engaging in interpersonal communication, these entrepreneurs are better positioned to initiate and nurture ties with wholesalers, credit-givers, and influential "Masters" within the Igbo apprenticeship and trade networks (Gul et al., 2021; Zager Kocja et al., 2023).

Empirical evidence suggests that extraversion facilitates "proactive networking," enabling entrepreneurs to transform fleeting market encounters into durable social bonds (James & Onoshakpor, 2025; Nwosu et al., 2022). High-scoring extraverts are more likely to participate in town union meetings and "Nkpuke" (women's groups), where critical information and mutual aid are exchanged. This outgoing nature reduces the "psychological distance" between the entrepreneur and potential mentors (Huang et al., 2022), leading to increased trust and resource accessibility. Consequently, extraversion acts as a catalyst for converting personality into structural advantage, fostering the bonding and bridging social capital necessary for business growth (Huang et al., 2022). Based on the foregoing, it is hypothesized that **H₀₁**: Extraversion has a significant positive effect on the accumulation of social capital among female entrepreneurs in South-East Nigeria.

Perseverance of Effort and Social Capital

The development of social capital within the indigenous "Igba-Boi" system is inherently tied to a long-term demonstration of "proven character" and reliability (Miller, 2017). In the competitive trade networks trust is not an immediate grant but a cultivated asset earned through the fulfillment of promises and consistent market performance over time. For female entrepreneurs, whose entry into traditionally male-dominated sectors may initially be met with skepticism, the psychological construct of "perseverance of effort" becomes a critical signal of institutional commitment (Melat et al., 2024; Nwosu et al., 2022).

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Perseverance serves as a form of "resilience," allowing individuals to adapt and continue despite adverse circumstances or social obstructions (Hadi & Abdullah, 2018; Loh & Dahesihsari, 2013). Therefore, by persisting through economic fluctuations and maintaining a steadfast business presence, women signal reliability to potential creditors, mentors, and trade partners. This consistent visibility deepens their "trust equity," which is essential for accessing the informal finance and network resources that drive the apprenticeship model.

Evidence suggests that "grit", defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals, is a foundational element that sustains women through demanding periods and enables them to redefine career success (Nkamnebe & Ezemba, 2020; Emoekpere, 2026). Furthermore, in a system where verbal agreements are based on "trust and credibility," the ability to withstand challenges reinforces the social bonds necessary for eventual business settlement and sustainable growth (Amaechi et al., 2025; Ezeajughu, 2021). Based on these considerations, it is hypothesized that **H₀₂**: Perseverance of effort significantly influences the depth and quality of social capital available to women in the adapted apprenticeship system.

Leadership Autonomy and Social Capital

Within the traditional framework of the Igbo apprenticeship model, institutional norms often emphasize rigid hierarchy and total subservience to the "Master." (Amaechi et al., 2025; Nnaeto & Nwagwu, 2025). However, the evolution of the "adapted" apprenticeship system suggests that for women to thrive, they must transition from passive roles to positions of Leadership Autonomy.

Autonomy in this context refers to the agency and self-governance required to make independent strategic decisions, manage proprietary "mini-networks" of sub-apprentices, and maintain a dedicated customer base. By exercising leadership autonomy, a female entrepreneur effectively shifts her perceived identity within the market hierarchy from a "helper" to a "Principal." (Brännback & Carsrud, 2017; Carsrud et al., 2009). This shift in status is a critical determinant in the acquisition of high-value social capital, as it signals professional maturity and institutional power to external stakeholders (Edeh et al., 2021).

Autonomy allows a woman to act as a bridge between different market clusters, enabling her to command respect and attract high-level connections that would otherwise be unavailable to those in purely subordinate roles. According to recent management literature, administrative and leadership independence are essential for building "bridging social capital," which facilitates access to exclusive trade secrets and bulk-credit facilities (Szabo, 2023; Özdemir, 2017; Nwosu, 2023).

When a woman demonstrates the capacity to lead her own business unit autonomously, she creates a "reputation effect" that encourages wholesalers and veteran traders to invest social and financial resources in her venture. Consequently, autonomy is not merely a personal preference but a strategic mechanism for leveraging the network benefits inherent in the Igbo business ecosystem. Based on this premise, the study posits the following: **H₀₃**: Leadership autonomy is a significant predictor of an individual woman's ability to command and leverage social capital for business growth.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design anchored on a quantitative approach to investigate the nexus between dimensions of grit and social capital.

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Population and Sampling Frame

While the geographic scope of this study is focused on the major commercial hubs of Onitsha (Main Market), Aba (Ariaria International Market), and Nnewi (Nkwo Nnewi), the target population of female entrepreneurs operating within the adapted Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) is treated as statistically infinite. This classification is justified by two factors: first, the lack of a centralized, comprehensive database or formal registry of female informal traders in these regions makes the construction of a definitive sampling frame impossible. Second, the sheer volume of daily entrants and the fluid nature of informal "sisterhood" networks in these hubs suggest a population size exceeding the 100,000 thresholds, where finite population corrections become negligible (Godden, 2004).

The population frame specifically comprises female owners of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) who have bypassed formal banking by utilizing "character currency" developed through informal mentorships. By focusing on Onitsha, Aba, and Nnewi, the study captures the highest concentration of these traders in West Africa, ensuring the results reflect the core of the adapted IAS.

Sample Size and Selection

Due to the undefined sampling frame, a sample size of 384 respondents was derived using Godden's (2004) formula for infinite populations at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. To ensure representativeness, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed. Initially, the three hubs were purposively selected as the historic and contemporary heartlands of Igbo commerce. Subsequently, a snowball sampling technique was used within these markets. This was necessary because the "adapted Igba-Boi" system is often undocumented; identifying participants required referrals from market union leaders and established "Queen Seeds" (senior female mentors) to ensure respondents possessed the specific lived experience of navigating male-dominated trade ecosystems.

Instrumentation and Operationalization

Data collection utilized a structured, self-administered questionnaire tailored to the South-East Nigerian market context. The instrument was pilot-tested among 30 female traders in Enugu to ensure face and content validity, with language refined for both English and Igbo speakers. Independent Variable (Grit) was measured via three dimensions, namely Extraversion (networking prowess), Perseverance of Effort (long-term tenacity), and Leadership Autonomy (independent decision-making), adapted from the Big Five Inventory and Duckworth's Grit Scale. Dependent Variable (Social Capital) was treated as a unidimensional construct focused on trust-based credit access (the ability to obtain goods on "trust") and network density.

Methods Data Analysis

The study employed a dual-layered analytical approach. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) provided a snapshot of the demographic profile and grit levels. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was then used to test the hypotheses. PLS-SEM was chosen for its robustness in handling latent constructs, its effectiveness in exploratory theory development, and its suitability for models where the primary goal is predicting the key target construct (Social Capital).

4. Results and Discussion

The study began with an assessment of the response rate and demographic distribution to provide context for the entrepreneurial environment. Out of the 384

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questionnaires distributed, 292 were retrieved, and after data cleaning to remove incomplete or inconsistent responses, 284 were deemed fit for final analysis.

Descriptive Statistics: Demographic Variables

Two primary demographic variables include years of business experience and sector of operation were analyzed to understand the profile of the female entrepreneurs in South-East Nigeria.

Table 1

Profile of Respondents by Business Experience and Sector

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Business Experience	1–5 Years	62	21.8
	6–10 Years	148	52.1
	11+ Years	74	26.1
Sector of Operation	Textiles/Apparel	112	39.4
	Food/FMCG	98	34.5
	General Merchandizing	74	26.1

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 shows that over half of the respondents have between 6 and 10 years of experience, suggesting they have moved past the "survivalist" stage of the apprenticeship system and are in the growth phase. The textile sector dominated the sample, reflecting the traditional concentration of female entrepreneurs in the South-East's major textile hubs like Aba and Onitsha.

Descriptive Statistics: Study Variables

The following table presents the mean and standard deviation for the independent and dependent variables.

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation of Study Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Extraversion	4.12	0.68	High
Perseverance of Effort	4.45	0.52	Very High
Leadership Autonomy	3.89	0.84	High
Social Capital (DV)	4.05	0.71	High

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Note: Scale 1.0–1.8 (Very Low); 4.2–5.0 (Very High).

The results in Table 2 indicate that Perseverance of Effort recorded the highest mean suggesting that long-term tenacity is the most prominent grit dimension among these women. Social Capital also scored high, validating that these women possess strong network-based resources.

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The Measurement Model (Outer Model)

In line with PLS-SEM requirements, we tested for reliability and validity.

Table 3

Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Extracted (AVE)	Variance
Extraversion	0.812	0.874	0.635	
Perseverance	0.845	0.891	0.672	
Leadership Autonomy	0.788	0.852	0.590	
Social Capital	0.860	0.903	0.701	

Source: PLS-SEM Output, 2026

All Cronbach's Alpha and CR values exceeded the threshold, and AVE values were above confirming that the instrument was reliable and possessed convergent validity.

The Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing (Inner Model)

The hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping (5000 sub-samples) to determine the significance of the path coefficients.

Table 4

Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hyp	Relationship	Path Coeff	T-Statistics	P-Value	Decision
H ₁	Ext-Soc.Cap	0.342	4.125	0.000	Supported
H ₂	Pers-Soc. Cap	0.458	6.842	0.000	Supported
H ₃	Auto-Soc. Cap	0.215	3.014	0.003	Supported

Source: PLS-SEM Output, 2026

Extraversion significantly impacts Social Capital, confirming that proactive networking is vital for market entry. Perseverance of Effort has the strongest impact, indicating that the "marathon" mindset of the female trader is her greatest asset in building trust. Leadership Autonomy is significant, showing that the ability to make independent decisions enhances the quality of a woman's professional network.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that Extraversion significantly drives the accumulation of Social Capital among female entrepreneurs in the South-East Nigerian markets. This result aligns with the social bridging theory, suggesting that the "vocal" and "assertive" nature of these women allows them to penetrate the historically closed circles of the Igbo Apprenticeship System. This finding is consistent with the work of Nwosu et al. (2022), who observed that in the competitive trade hubs of Onitsha and Aba, high-energy networking and proactive communication are essential for women to convert strangers into loyal trade mentors. By being extroverted, these women are able to initiate the "bridging capital" necessary to secure initial inventory and market information, effectively using their personality as a key to doors that are traditionally unlocked only by male lineage or formal contracts.

Furthermore, Perseverance of Effort emerged as the strongest predictor of Social Capital, indicating that long-term tenacity is the primary currency for building

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trust in the regional trade ecosystem. This outcome suggests that the "trust equity" required for credit-based transactions (the hallmark of the *Igba-Boi* system) is not granted immediately but is earned through consistent, grit-driven performance over time. This aligns with the findings of Obunadike and Okoli (2023), who argued that "character currency" in Igbo business circles is a product of time and reliability. For the female entrepreneur, whose presence may initially be met with skepticism, staying the course through economic fluctuations signals a level of reliability that compels male wholesalers and fellow traders to offer them the same social and financial leverage typically reserved for male apprentices.

The significant relationship between Leadership Autonomy and Social Capital highlights a critical shift in the female adaptation of the apprenticeship model. Unlike the traditional male model, which emphasizes total subservience to a master, women in this study leveraged their independence to build unique, self-managed networks. This finding corroborates the research by Akanji et al. (2023), which posited that female entrepreneurs in Nigeria often prefer "autonomous networking" to avoid the restrictive hierarchies of patriarchal trade structures. By maintaining autonomy, these women are seen not just as helpers, but as "Principals" of their own domains, which attracts higher-quality professional associations and strategic partnerships. This indicates that the more independent a woman is in her decision-making, the more she is respected as a legitimate stakeholder within the broader social capital network of South-East Nigeria

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the intersection of female entrepreneurial grit and social capital within the adapted framework of the Igbo Apprenticeship System (IAS) in South-East Nigeria. The empirical evidence confirms that the success of women in this historically patriarchal trade ecosystem is deeply rooted in specific psychological dimensions of grit.

By analyzing the roles of Extraversion, Perseverance of Effort, and Leadership Autonomy, this research concludes that internal psychological resources are the primary drivers for building the "trust currency" or Social Capital required to thrive in Nigeria's commercial hubs. While the traditional male *Igba-Boi* relies on structured "settlements," the female entrepreneur earns her place through proactive networking and an unwavering marathon mindset. Ultimately, grit acts as a strategic bridge, allowing women to bypass institutional voids and cultural barriers to claim their stake in the regional economy.

Practical Implications

The findings carry significant implications for various stakeholders. For female entrepreneurs, the study highlights that business growth in the South-East is contingent upon the strategic cultivation of social networks; personality is not just a trait but a business asset.

For educational and vocational institutions, the results suggest that entrepreneurial training should move beyond technical skills (bookkeeping or marketing) to include "soft power" development, such as networking strategies and psychological resilience training.

For policymakers, the study demonstrates that the informal social capital within the Igbo trade system is a robust, self-sustaining financial infrastructure. Recognizing these female-led adaptations could lead to more effective micro-credit schemes that leverage existing community-based trust networks rather than demanding formal collateral that many women still lack.

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Based on the three specific findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Since Extraversion was found to be a significant driver of social capital, trade associations and chambers of commerce in South-East Nigeria should establish formal "Female Mentorship Hubs." These platforms would provide a structured environment for extroverted networking, allowing emerging female traders to proactively connect with established "Market Queens" and wholesalers, thereby accelerating their integration into the trade ecosystem.
- ii. Given that Perseverance of effort had the strongest impact on social capital, NGOs and business development agencies should design "Grit-Based Mentorship" programs. These programs should focus on long-term business coaching that encourages women to maintain a consistent market presence. By highlighting "tenacity" as a prerequisite for creditworthiness, women can be better prepared to build the long-term reliability required to access informal inventory financing.
- iii. Since Leadership autonomy significantly predicts the ability to leverage social networks, micro-finance banks and cooperative societies should adopt "Autonomy-Friendly" lending models. Rather than requiring male guarantors or husband-consent clauses, which stifle independence, financial institutions should recognize the autonomous leadership of these women as a sign of business maturity. Empowering women to make independent financial and strategic decisions will, in turn, enhance their professional status and the quality of the social capital they command.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Despite the significance of these findings, this study is subject to several limitations that offer pathways for future research. First, the cross-sectional survey design only captures a snapshot of the relationship between grit and social capital at a single point in time, which limits definitive conclusions regarding causality; future studies should adopt a longitudinal approach to track how these psychological traits evolve as a female enterprise matures from apprenticeship to market leadership.

Second, the geographic concentration on the three major hubs of Onitsha, Aba, and Nnewi, the heartlands of the Igbo Apprenticeship System, means the results may not be fully generalizable to more rural or less commercially dense areas of South-East Nigeria. Subsequent research should include a broader geographic spread, incorporating emerging trade zones in Enugu and Ebonyi states, to provide a more comprehensive regional perspective.

Third, the reliance on self-administered questionnaires may introduce social desirability or recall bias; therefore, future inquiries should integrate qualitative interviews or ethnographic observations to triangulate quantitative findings and gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of these women.

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