

## **Integrating Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Training into the Curriculum of Priestly Formation: A Study of the Enugu Catholic Diocese**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The formation of Catholic priests has undergone significant transformation throughout the history of the Church, shaped by theological, social, and ecclesiastical developments. From its early beginnings, the Church has recognized the necessity of preparing candidates for the priesthood not only in doctrine and liturgy but also in personal holiness and pastoral care. In the early centuries of Christianity, there was no formal system for priestly training. Instead, candidates for ordination were typically mentored by bishops or experienced clergy through a form of apprenticeship, learning by observing and participating in ministry (Lehmann, 2010). The emphasis was placed on spiritual maturity and moral integrity, often measured through community recognition and ecclesiastical endorsement.

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) marked a turning point in the institutionalization of priestly formation. In response to abuses and lack of uniformity in clerical education, the Council mandated the establishment of seminaries in every diocese, emphasizing systematic training in philosophy, theology, Latin, and Church doctrine (O'Malley, 2000). This initiative sought to produce educated, disciplined, and doctrinally sound clergy, thereby enhancing the integrity and influence of the Catholic priesthood. In the 20th century, the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) brought renewed focus to priestly formation, emphasizing pastoral orientation, cultural sensitivity, and holistic human development. The Council's decree, *Optatam Totius* (1965), called for a more comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to formation, encouraging seminaries to integrate spiritual, academic, pastoral, and human dimensions (Vatican Council II, 1965). Building on this, Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992) further outlined the four essential pillars of priestly formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. The document emphasized the need for personal development, deep prayer life, intellectual rigor, and practical pastoral experience (John Paul II, 1992). These pillars remain

foundational in seminary education today.

Recent Church documents, including the 2016 *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (The Gift of the Priestly Vocation) issued by the Congregation for the Clergy, highlight the evolving demands of priestly ministry in a complex world. The document encourages formation programs to include not only academic and spiritual components but also entrepreneurial and leadership skills to help priests effectively engage with modern social, economic, and pastoral challenges (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016). Thus, the history of priestly formation in the Catholic Church reflects a continuous adaptation to the spiritual, educational, and pastoral needs of the times, with growing emphasis on equipping priests to be not only spiritual leaders but also agents of social transformation.

The history of priestly formation in the Catholic Church of Nigeria is deeply rooted in the missionary efforts of the 19th and 20th centuries. As Christianity spread across the African continent, the need for indigenous clergy became increasingly evident, particularly as the Catholic Church recognized the importance of local leadership in the effective evangelization of diverse African communities. The earliest Catholic missions in Nigeria were established by the Society of African Missions (SMA) and later by the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans), who arrived in Southern Nigeria in the 19th century. These missionaries, primarily from France and Ireland, laid the foundations for Catholicism in regions such as Lagos, Onitsha, and Calabar (Kalu, 2007). Initially, all ecclesiastical leadership and priestly functions were managed by expatriate missionaries, and early priestly formation for Nigerians occurred abroad or in basic catechetical centers established by these missionaries.

A landmark in the development of indigenous priestly formation was the establishment of St. Paul's Seminary, Igbariam, in 1908, followed by the more advanced Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu, founded in 1924 by the Holy Ghost Fathers. Bigard Seminary played and continues to play a critical role in the intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral formation of priests in Nigeria and West Africa (Nwosu, 2009). It was one of the first major seminaries in sub-Saharan Africa to train Nigerian candidates entirely within the country, using a curriculum modeled after European seminaries but adapted to the local socio-cultural and religious context. In the post-independence period (after 1960), the Catholic Church in Nigeria began to assert greater autonomy in managing seminaries, ordaining bishops, and shaping the curriculum of priestly formation to address the realities of Nigerian society. The Nigerian Bishops' Conference actively

implemented the guidelines of Vatican II's *Optatam Totius* (1965) and Pope John Paul II's *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992), emphasizing the integration of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation within the seminary system (Okonkwo, 2012). This holistic model aimed at producing priests who are not only spiritually grounded but also capable of responding to Nigeria's complex pastoral and socio-economic realities.

In recent decades, challenges such as poverty, youth unemployment, ethnic tensions, and technological change have prompted calls for further innovation in priestly formation. Some Catholic dioceses, including Enugu Diocese, have explored incorporating entrepreneurship, leadership development, and vocational training into seminary curricula to prepare priests for dynamic roles in their communities not just as spiritual leaders, but also as agents of social transformation (Eze, 2018). Today, Nigeria boasts over 20 major seminaries and numerous minor seminaries, producing one of the highest numbers of Catholic priests in Africa. Seminaries such as Bigard Memorial, Seat of Wisdom Seminary (Owerri), and Saints Peter and Paul Seminary (Bodija, Ibadan) continue to uphold a rigorous formation program rooted in the Catholic tradition while responding to evolving pastoral needs.

In the face of increasing global economic uncertainty, rising youth unemployment, and rapidly evolving labor markets, entrepreneurship and apprenticeship have emerged as critical strategies for economic empowerment, job creation, and social inclusion. These twin concepts serve as pathways not only for individual self-reliance but also for national economic development, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. Entrepreneurship in the other way, is widely recognized as a driving force of economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017), entrepreneurship fosters innovation by introducing new products, services, and processes that improve productivity and market dynamism. In many economies, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) often initiated by entrepreneurs account for a significant portion of employment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (World Bank, 2020).

In Nigeria, where the formal sector is unable to absorb the growing population of graduates and school leavers, entrepreneurship has become a viable alternative to paid employment. Government initiatives such as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) program underscore the importance of entrepreneurial

education and practice as a means of reducing dependency on white-collar jobs and stimulating economic independence (Adebayo & Kolawole, 2013).

Furthermore, apprenticeship, on the other hand, provides practical, hands-on training in specific trades or professions. It bridges the gap between theoretical education and workplace skills, enabling individuals to acquire competencies that are directly applicable in the labor market (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2014). Traditional apprenticeship systems in Africa, especially in Nigeria, have long served as informal but effective means of vocational education and skill transfer across generations (Okon, 2011). In contemporary society, structured apprenticeships offer a dual benefit: they reduce youth unemployment and provide industries with a skilled workforce. According to UNESCO (2016), apprenticeship systems enhance employability by equipping learners with technical and soft skills that align with the demands of a changing economy. Additionally, apprenticeships support entrepreneurship by empowering trainees to eventually establish their own enterprises.

The intersection of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship presents a powerful model for sustainable development. Apprenticeship provides the technical foundation, while entrepreneurship offers the vision and managerial skills to scale those competencies into viable business ventures. This synergy is particularly relevant in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, where informal economies dominate, and education systems often fail to meet the practical needs of the labor market (Nwachukwu & Onyeneke, 2017). Furthermore, the integration of these models into formal education and vocational training—especially within religious and community-based institutions—has the potential to instill not just economic skills, but also values such as discipline, resilience, and social responsibility (Eze, 2018).

The integration of technology training into priestly formation is increasingly essential in the contemporary digital age. As the Church navigates the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly evolving technological landscape, it becomes imperative that priests are equipped not only with spiritual and theological knowledge but also with digital literacy and competence. This integration responds to the pastoral, educational, and evangelization demands of the 21st-century Church.

Firstly, the Church's mission of evangelization now extends to digital platforms, which have become vital spaces for communication and ministry. Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the importance of digital technology in evangelization, referring to the digital world as a new

"Areopagus" for proclaiming the Gospel (Benedict XVI, 2010). Similarly, Pope Francis has highlighted the internet as "a gift from God" and urged the Church to use it wisely and effectively to spread the message of Christ (Francis, 2014). Training seminarians in technology prepares them to leverage digital tools for catechesis, liturgical streaming, online community building, and pastoral outreach.

Secondly, many aspects of parish administration and communication now rely on technological tools. From managing databases of parishioners to creating digital bulletins and maintaining social media presence, priests must possess a functional understanding of digital systems. Integrating technology into seminary curricula ensures that future priests are competent in using administrative tools that enhance transparency, efficiency, and connectivity in parish life (Eze, 2020).

Thirdly, technology offers powerful opportunities for ongoing theological education and spiritual growth. Access to online theological resources, webinars, virtual retreats, and scholarly forums broadens the scope of learning beyond traditional classroom settings. This is particularly relevant in contexts where access to theological libraries and institutions is limited. Training in digital literacy empowers priests to be lifelong learners and informed leaders (Iroegbu, 2021).

Furthermore, in a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and data-driven decision-making, the Church must engage in ethical discourse on these developments. Priests, as moral and spiritual leaders, need to be well-versed in these technologies to guide their communities with wisdom and responsibility. Integrating training on the ethical implications of technology prepares clergy to contribute meaningfully to societal conversations on justice, privacy, and human dignity in the digital age (Onwumere, 2022). Therefore, integrating technology training in priestly formation is not merely an add-on but a critical component of holistic pastoral preparation. It equips priests to serve effectively in a digitalized world, enhances their administrative and communication capabilities, enriches their personal and theological development, and empowers them to be active participants in the ethical dialogue on emerging technologies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, the Catholic Church has increasingly emphasized the importance of holistic priestly formation that addresses not only the spiritual and pastoral dimensions of the priesthood

but also the social and economic realities facing communities. In Nigeria, and particularly within the Enugu Catholic Diocese, many priests serve in parishes where poverty, unemployment, and youth disenfranchisement are prevalent. Despite this socio-economic context, the current curriculum of priestly formation in most seminaries remains largely centered on theological, philosophical, and liturgical instruction, with limited or no formal inclusion of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training.

This gap has significant implications. Priests, as community leaders and change agents, are often called upon to provide guidance and support in addressing social and economic challenges. However, without sufficient training in practical entrepreneurial and vocational skills, many may lack the competence and confidence to effectively contribute to community empowerment initiatives, youth development, or parish-based economic projects. Additionally, the absence of such training may hinder priests from fostering self-reliance and sustainability within their parishes, especially in rural and economically marginalized areas.

Moreover, the increasing demands on priests to manage parish resources, oversee developmental projects, and engage with youth on career-related issues highlight the need for broader competencies beyond traditional clerical training. The Church in Enugu Diocese, while active in pastoral and charitable work, may be missing the opportunity to cultivate a generation of priests equipped to integrate economic empowerment with evangelization. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate how entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training can be systematically integrated into the curriculum of priestly formation in the Enugu Catholic Diocese. Such integration has the potential to enhance the social relevance of the priesthood, promote sustainable development within parish communities, and empower priests to be both spiritual shepherds and catalysts for economic transformation.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective is to examine the relevance, feasibility, and impact of integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the curriculum of priestly formation in the Enugu Catholic Diocese, with a view to enhancing the socio-economic engagement and community development roles of priests. Specific objectives are:

1. To assess the current state of the curriculum used in priestly formation within the Enugu Catholic Diocese, particularly in relation to entrepreneurship and vocational training content.
2. To explore the perceptions of seminarians, formators, and diocesan authorities regarding the integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training in priestly formation.
3. To identify the specific entrepreneurial and vocational skills that are most relevant and applicable to the pastoral and community responsibilities of priests in Enugu Diocese.
4. To evaluate the potential benefits and challenges associated with integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship programs into the seminary curriculum.
5. To propose a framework or model for effectively incorporating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the priestly formation curriculum of the Enugu Catholic Diocese.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the current state of the curriculum used in priestly formation within the Enugu Catholic Diocese, particularly with regard to entrepreneurship and vocational training content?
2. How do seminarians, formators, and diocesan authorities perceive the integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training in priestly formation?
3. What specific entrepreneurial and vocational skills are most relevant and applicable to the pastoral and community responsibilities of priests in the Enugu Catholic Diocese?
4. What are the potential benefits and challenges of integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship programs into the seminary curriculum?
5. What framework or model can be proposed for effectively incorporating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the priestly formation curriculum of the Enugu Catholic Diocese?

## **Significance of the Study**

This study on Integrating Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Training into the Curriculum of Priestly Formation: A Study of the Enugu Catholic Diocese is significant for several reasons, both in theory and in practice.

### **1. Contribution to Holistic Priestly Formation:**

The study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge advocating for a more holistic approach to priestly formation. By highlighting the need for practical skills alongside theological and spiritual training, it aligns with the Church's vision of forming priests who are well-rounded and responsive to the temporal and spiritual needs of their communities.

### **2. Empowerment of Priests for Community Development:**

Given the socio-economic challenges faced by many parishes in the Enugu Catholic Diocese, the integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training has the potential to equip priests with the skills necessary to initiate and manage community-based projects, support youth empowerment initiatives, and promote self-reliance among parishioners.

### **3. Curriculum Innovation in Seminaries:**

The findings will provide valuable insights for seminary formators and education policy makers within the Church on how to innovate the existing priestly formation curriculum. It will serve as a guide for designing and implementing programs that are responsive to contemporary pastoral realities.

### **4. Support for Vocational and Youth Empowerment Programs:**

The study will help the Diocese and other Church-based organizations strengthen their roles in tackling youth unemployment and underemployment by training future priests who are capable of guiding, mentoring, and establishing vocational and entrepreneurial initiatives at the grassroots level.

### **5. Basis for Policy Development:**

For diocesan authorities and Catholic educational institutions, the research could serve as a foundational document for formulating policies that support the inclusion of non-traditional but



contextually relevant subjects, such as entrepreneurship and vocational education, into priestly formation programs.

### **6. Broader Societal Impact:**

By empowering priests to become more economically and socially engaged, the study can indirectly contribute to local development, poverty reduction, and the strengthening of the Church's presence as a force for positive transformation in society. In summary, the study will offer practical recommendations and academic contributions that can enhance priestly formation, improve parish-level development efforts, and promote the Church's mission of integral human development.

### **Scope/Delimitation of the Study**

This study is focused on exploring the integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the curriculum of priestly formation within the context of the Enugu Catholic Diocese. It specifically examines the relevance, perceptions, and potential benefits of such integration in enhancing the pastoral and socio-economic roles of priests. Geographically, the study is limited to seminaries, formation houses, and diocesan institutions located within the Enugu Catholic Diocese. While the findings may have broader implications for other dioceses in Nigeria or similar ecclesiastical contexts, this research does not extend beyond Enugu Diocese.

The population of interest includes:

- 1) Seminarians currently undergoing priestly formation,
- 2) Formators (spiritual directors, academic instructors, and vocational trainers),
- 3) Diocesan authorities (e.g., vocation directors, seminary rectors, and officials from the diocesan education and pastoral commissions).

The study will not cover the general Catholic education system or youth empowerment programs unrelated to priestly formation. Also, the research will not delve deeply into theological debates on priesthood but will focus on the curricular and practical aspects of incorporating entrepreneurship and vocational training into seminary education. Time-wise, the study will consider current and recent curriculum structures and perspectives as they exist within the past five years, providing a contemporary view of the issue. It will use a combination of qualitative

and quantitative methods to gather and analyze data. In summary, while the study is context-specific to the Enugu Catholic Diocese, its outcomes may serve as a model or reference for similar efforts in other ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The review of related literature was done under the following sub-headings:

### **Conceptual Framework**

- Concept of entrepreneurship
- Concept of apprenticeship
- Curriculum development in religious institutions
- Current state of the curriculum used in priestly formation particularly in relation to entrepreneurship and vocational training content
- Perceptions of seminarians, formators, and diocesan authorities regarding the integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training in priestly formation
- Specific entrepreneurial and vocational skills that are most relevant and applicable to the pastoral and community responsibilities of priests
- Potential benefits and challenges associated with integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship
- Framework or model for effectively incorporating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the priestly formation curriculum

### **Theoretical Framework**

Relevant educational or theological theories (e.g., experiential learning, liberation theology)

### **Empirical Review**

Previous studies on entrepreneurship and clergy

Case studies of seminaries with vocational training

## **Gaps in the Literature**

### **Concept of entrepreneurship:**

Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted concept that plays a critical role in economic growth, innovation, and social transformation. Broadly defined, entrepreneurship involves the identification of opportunities, the mobilization of resources, and the creation and management of ventures that offer value in the form of goods or services (Hisrich, Peters, & Shepherd, 2017). It is not merely about starting a business but about solving problems, taking calculated risks, and driving change in society. Schumpeter (1934), one of the earliest theorists on entrepreneurship, described the entrepreneur as an innovator who implements change through "creative destruction," replacing old methods with new ways of doing things. From this classical perspective, entrepreneurship is closely tied to innovation, where individuals introduce new products, processes, or business models that reshape markets and industries.

Modern interpretations have expanded the scope of entrepreneurship to include not only economic but also social dimensions. For instance, Drucker (1985) emphasized that entrepreneurship is about "systematic innovation," which can occur in any institutional setting, including non-profit and religious organizations. Social entrepreneurship, for example, focuses on ventures that aim to solve social issues while being sustainable and impactful (Dees, 2001). This broader view aligns with the idea of integrating entrepreneurship into unconventional domains like religious or pastoral training.

In the context of education and development, entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as a tool for self-reliance, job creation, and poverty alleviation, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), entrepreneurship education is designed to equip individuals with skills and mindsets needed to be self-employed and to contribute to national development. When applied to priestly formation, the concept of entrepreneurship can be interpreted not just as a means of economic empowerment, but also as a framework for innovation in ministry and community engagement. Priests trained in entrepreneurial thinking can lead initiatives that address local needs, mobilize parish resources creatively, and foster youth empowerment through skill development and mentoring. In summary, entrepreneurship is a dynamic and evolving concept encompassing innovation, risk-taking, and value creation. Its integration into priestly formation, especially in contexts like the

Enugu Catholic Diocese, can help bridge the gap between spiritual leadership and socio-economic transformation.

### **Concept of Apprenticeship**

Apprenticeship is a system of training individuals, particularly young people, through a structured program that combines theoretical instruction with practical, on-the-job experience under the guidance of skilled mentors. This method of education and skill acquisition has historical roots and continues to be relevant in both traditional and modern economies.

### **Definition and Historical Background**

Apprenticeship is traditionally defined as a system of training a new generation of practitioners in a trade or profession through a combination of practical experience and formal instruction. According to Grollmann and Rauner (2007), apprenticeship systems have existed since medieval times, when young people were bound to skilled artisans to learn trades such as carpentry, blacksmithing, and tailoring. In many countries, apprenticeship evolved within guild systems and later formalized into vocational education systems. Today, it is recognized as a critical pathway to employment, particularly in industries requiring specific technical and manual skills.

### **Characteristics of Apprenticeship**

Modern apprenticeship programs typically exhibit the following characteristics:

- 1) **Work-based Learning:** Apprentices acquire practical skills in a real-world environment, allowing them to apply classroom knowledge directly to their work (OECD, 2014).
- 2) **Mentorship:** Apprentices are guided by experienced workers or professionals who provide feedback and ensure quality skill development (Smith & Kemmis, 2013).
- 3) **Structured Curriculum:** There is a defined curriculum that outlines both theoretical learning and practical tasks that must be mastered (Fuller & Unwin, 2003).
- 4) **Certification:** Successful completion of an apprenticeship often leads to a nationally recognized qualification or license to practice (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2012).

## **Benefits of Apprenticeship**

- ❖ For Apprentices: It provides a pathway to employment, income generation, and lifelong learning. Apprentices gain job-relevant skills and enhance their employability.
- ❖ For Employers: Apprenticeship allows for the grooming of a skilled and loyal workforce tailored to the specific needs of the company (Lerman, 2010).
- ❖ For the Economy: It reduces youth unemployment, fosters innovation, and bridges the gap between education and labor market requirements (UNESCO, 2018).

## **Contemporary Challenges and Prospects**

Despite its benefits, apprenticeship faces challenges such as poor policy implementation, inadequate funding, lack of industry involvement, and stigmatization in some cultures as inferior to formal university education. However, the growing recognition of its importance in addressing youth unemployment and skills mismatches offers a promising future for apprenticeship systems, especially in developing countries like Nigeria (Okolie, 2014).

## **Curriculum Development in Religious Institutions**

Curriculum development in religious institutions refers to the process of designing, organizing, implementing, and evaluating educational content and experiences in schools, seminaries, or training centers affiliated with religious bodies. The aim is to provide both religious and secular knowledge in line with the institution's faith-based values and mission. This curriculum development in religious institutions is often guided by theological, moral, and spiritual goals, in addition to academic and developmental objectives. It includes religious education (e.g., scripture, ethics, church history) and general education (e.g., mathematics, science, languages), often integrated to reflect the values of the religious tradition (Wright, 2004). According to Tyler (1949), curriculum development involves four fundamental questions:

1. What educational purposes should the institution seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided to attain these purposes?
3. How can these experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Religious institutions apply these principles while incorporating doctrinal teachings, spiritual formation, and character education.

### **Features of curriculum in religious institutions includes:**

**Faith Integration:** The curriculum reflects religious values, teachings, and practices. Biblical or scriptural foundations influence subject content and pedagogy (Hull, 2003).

1) Moral and Character Education: Religious curricula emphasize ethical development, community service, and virtues like honesty, compassion, and discipline (Arthur, 2003).

2) Dual Curriculum: Many religious institutions run a dual curriculum — one part focuses on religious studies, the other on secular subjects, often in compliance with national education policies (Engbretson, 2008).

3) Contextualization: Curriculum is adapted to the socio-cultural and denominational context of the religious community. This may affect language use, pedagogical methods, and content focus (Groome, 1998).

### **Importance of Curriculum Development in Religious Institutions**

i) **Spiritual Formation:** The curriculum nurtures students' spiritual lives, instilling a deeper understanding of their faith tradition (Astley & Francis, 1992). Many religious institutions are aligning with national curricula while maintaining religious distinctiveness (UNESCO, 2020).

ii) **Holistic Education:** Combines intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development, promoting well-rounded individuals (Best, 2000). Furthermore, digital tools and online platforms are increasingly used for religious instruction, especially in seminaries and theological schools (Ajiboye & Akinola, 2022).

iii) **Cultural Identity:** Helps preserve and transmit the values, rituals, and identity of a religious community (Gearon, 2013) and some curricula now include aspects of comparative religion to promote tolerance and understanding (Gearon, 2013).

iv) **Citizenship and Moral Leadership:** Equips learners to be responsible, ethical citizens rooted in faith-based leadership values (Jackson, 2004).

## **Current State of the Curriculum Used in Priestly Formation: Focus on Entrepreneurship and Vocational Training Content**

The curriculum for priestly formation traditionally emphasizes spiritual, intellectual, human, and pastoral development, following guidelines such as those outlined in the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (The Gift of the Priestly Vocation) issued by the Congregation for the Clergy in 2016. While this framework ensures the holistic development of future priests, the inclusion of entrepreneurship and vocational training remains relatively limited, especially in many parts of Africa and the developing world. Priestly formation traditionally focuses on:

Spiritual Formation – Developing a deep prayer life, sacramental life, and personal holiness.

Intellectual Formation – Studying philosophy, theology, church history, canon law, and biblical studies.

Pastoral Formation – Gaining practical experience in pastoral care, liturgy, and evangelization.

Human Formation – Cultivating virtues, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills. These dimensions aim to prepare seminarians for life as Catholic clergy, focusing on service, mission and leadership within the Church (Congregation for the Clergy, 2016).

### **The Gap: Entrepreneurship and Vocational Training**

Despite its strengths, the current curriculum in many seminaries shows a notable gap in entrepreneurship and vocational training, especially in regions where economic sustainability and self-reliance are critical challenges. There is limited emphasis on:

- a. Financial literacy and economic stewardship
- b. Skills in project management or business development
- c. Training in agricultural, artisanal, or technical trades
- d. Social entrepreneurship for community development

This gap becomes more evident in dioceses and religious communities that face financial difficulties and where priests are expected to manage parishes, schools, hospitals, or social enterprises. Moreover some efforts have been made towards emerging trends at reform. Some religious institutions and seminaries are beginning to recognize the importance of integrating entrepreneurship and vocational training into priestly formation. These efforts include:

Incorporation of management and leadership courses among the avalanche of courses that are offered in the seminarians. Some seminaries are beginning to include modules on project management, financial planning, and leadership as part of pastoral theology or administration courses (Ngari, 2020). In several dioceses, as well, particularly in rural Africa, vocational programs in agriculture, carpentry, tailoring, or ICT are being introduced to promote self-reliance among seminarians and to model sustainability for local communities (Okoh, 2019). There is therefore, a growing interest in empowering seminarians to develop social enterprises projects that address social issues like education, poverty, and unemployment while generating income for Church-run institutions (Ezeanya, 2021). The church also collaborate with external institutions in the training of her seminarians. Some seminaries partner with universities, NGOs, or government bodies to provide short-term training or certification in vocational skills and entrepreneurship development. While priestly formation remains primarily spiritual and pastoral, there is a growing need to incorporate entrepreneurship and vocational training into the curriculum, especially in economically challenged contexts. Doing so will not only enhance the self-reliance of priests and their institutions but also empower them to be proactive agents of social and economic transformation in their communities.

Despite positive developments, several challenges hinder the full integration of entrepreneurship into priestly formation:

- **Resistance to Change:** Some clerical authorities may view entrepreneurship as a secular distraction from the priest's spiritual mission.
- **Lack of Trained Faculty:** Seminaries often lack experts who can teach business, technology, or vocational subjects.
- **Curriculum Overload:** The existing curriculum is already packed, leaving little room for additional subjects.
- **Limited Funding:** Implementing entrepreneurship programs requires resources that many seminaries do not possess.



## **Perceptions of Seminarians, Formators, and Diocesan Authorities Regarding the Integration of Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Training in Priestly Formation**

The inclusion of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training in priestly formation is a subject of growing interest in many parts of the world, especially in regions facing economic hardship and rising youth unemployment. While traditional priestly formation emphasizes spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral growth, there is an increasing call for the curriculum to also equip seminarians with practical life skills that promote sustainability, innovation, and community development. The perceptions of seminarians, formators, and diocesan authorities toward this integration vary based on experience, theological orientation, and socio-economic context.

### **1. Seminarians' Perceptions**

Many seminarians increasingly recognize the importance of entrepreneurship and vocational skills in their future pastoral work. In a study by Ngari (2020), seminarians in East Africa expressed enthusiasm for acquiring entrepreneurial skills to help them manage parishes, schools, and diocesan projects more effectively. They also saw vocational skills as a way to promote youth empowerment and poverty alleviation within their communities. However, some seminarians fear that such training might dilute the spiritual and contemplative focus of the priestly vocation. According to Okoh (2019), some seminarians in Nigerian seminaries expressed concern that engaging in business-oriented training might lead to materialism or distract from their spiritual formation. “We need the skills to survive and to help our people, but we must not lose focus on our core spiritual mission.” Seminarian respondent, cited in Ezeanya (2021)

### **2. Formators' Perceptions**

Formators (those responsible for shaping the intellectual and spiritual development of seminarians) often hold mixed or cautious views about the integration of entrepreneurship into seminary curricula. Some formators acknowledge its relevance for pastoral sustainability and consider it a practical response to the Church's mission in the modern world (Sullivan, 2001). They believe that entrepreneurial education can help future priests become more effective administrators and community leaders. On the other hand, there is apprehension among some formators about the risk of secularizing priestly formation. As highlighted by Cooling (2010),

some believe that excessive emphasis on business and vocational skills may erode the priest's prophetic and sacrificial identity. Moreover, formators often cite curriculum overload and lack of qualified instructors as practical barriers to implementation (Ngari, 2020).

### 3. Diocesan Authorities' Perceptions

Diocesan authorities—such as bishops and seminary rectors—are generally more supportive of integrating entrepreneurship and vocational training, especially in dioceses where priests are expected to manage schools, clinics, farms, and other institutions. According to Ezeanya (2021), many African bishops see entrepreneurship as a tool for self-reliance, evangelization, and economic justice. These leaders believe that a priest who can manage a sustainable parish, train youth in skills, and initiate social enterprises is better positioned to witness to the Gospel in a meaningful way (Ajiboye & Akinola, 2022). Nevertheless, they also stress the importance of maintaining theological and pastoral integrity, ensuring that economic education supports, rather than overshadows, spiritual formation.

#### Summary

Stakeholder	Perception
Seminarians	Generally positive, see relevance in real-world ministry; some spiritual concerns
Formators	Mixed views; value practical skills but wary of shifting focus from spirituality
Diocesan Authorities	Increasingly supportive; view entrepreneurship as essential for sustainability

The integration of entrepreneurship and vocational training is gaining acceptance, but stakeholders emphasize the need for balance ensuring such skills are taught in ways that complement the spiritual and pastoral mission of the priesthood, not compete with it.

## **Specific Entrepreneurial and Vocational Skills That Are Most Relevant and Applicable to the Pastoral and Community Responsibilities of Priests**

Priests, particularly those serving in rural or underserved areas, often go beyond their traditional spiritual roles to act as community leaders, mentors, organizers, and development agents. To effectively fulfill these multifaceted responsibilities, entrepreneurial and vocational skills become crucial. These skills not only empower priests to support their communities economically but also enhance their ability to manage church resources efficiently, initiate community-based projects, and foster sustainable development.

In today's dynamic and demanding pastoral environments, priests require more than theological knowledge. Entrepreneurial and vocational skills are instrumental in equipping them to be effective agents of spiritual, social, and economic transformation. Incorporating these skills into seminary education and ongoing clerical training can greatly enhance the impact of priests in their communities. Some entrepreneurial courses and apprenticeship skills that can be integrated into seminary curriculum.

### ***1. Leadership and Project Management***

Leadership is central to the pastoral role of priests, as they guide not only the spiritual lives of their congregants but also initiate and oversee various community and church projects. Entrepreneurial leadership skills, including vision setting, strategic planning, resource mobilization, and conflict resolution, enable priests to organize initiatives such as building schools, health centers, and cooperative societies (Oviawe, 2010). Project management skills are vital in ensuring the proper execution of these initiatives within time and budget constraints.

### ***2. Financial Literacy and Resource Management***

Sound financial management is critical for priests managing parish funds, donations, or community development projects. Financial literacy including budgeting, accounting, fundraising, and financial reporting—enhances transparency and sustainability of church and community programs (Okebukola, 2012). Additionally, knowledge of income-generating

ventures can assist priests in initiating economic activities such as agriculture, crafts, or vocational training centers to uplift parishioners.

### ***3. Communication and Public Relations***

Effective communication is essential for spiritual and social engagement. Priests need persuasive communication skills to deliver impactful sermons, resolve conflicts, promote peace, and advocate for social justice. Public relations skills are equally important for building trust, mobilizing support, and managing relationships with stakeholders such as government bodies, NGOs, and community members (Nwangwu, 2007).

### ***4. Entrepreneurial Innovation and Opportunity Identification***

Priests operating in economically challenged communities must identify innovative opportunities to address local problems. Entrepreneurial thinking enables them to conceptualize and implement sustainable initiatives such as cooperative societies, youth empowerment programs, and skill acquisition centers (Olokundun et al., 2017). This capacity to innovate and take calculated risks is crucial in contexts where traditional support structures are weak or absent.

### ***5. Vocational and Technical Skills***

Basic vocational skills—such as agriculture, tailoring, carpentry, or computer literacy—can be leveraged by priests both to sustain themselves and to train community members. These skills can be embedded in parish-based vocational training programs that enhance the employability of youth and reduce poverty (Adeyemo, 2009). For instance, a priest skilled in agriculture can initiate parish farms that serve as both food sources and training grounds.

### ***6. Counseling and Social Work Skills***

Priests often act as counselors, addressing psychological, marital, and social issues. Vocational training in counseling and basic social work prepares them to support vulnerable groups like widows, orphans, and the mentally ill more effectively (Adegbola, 2011). These skills are especially important in areas with limited access to professional mental health or social services.

## ***7. ICT and Digital Literacy***

With the increasing use of technology in ministry and education, digital literacy has become a relevant vocational skill. ICT skills enable priests to evangelize through digital platforms, maintain administrative records, and facilitate online learning or support groups (Eze & Eze, 2018). Moreover, digital platforms can aid in fundraising, networking, and community engagement.

## **Potential Benefits and Challenges Associated with Integrating Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship**

The integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship represents a dynamic strategy for equipping individuals—particularly youths and early-career professionals—with practical skills, business acumen, and self-reliance competencies necessary for success in today's competitive economy. This combination bridges the gap between technical know-how and business management knowledge, creating a pathway toward sustainable livelihoods. However, the integration also comes with inherent challenges that must be addressed through policy, curriculum design, and institutional support.

### **Potential Benefits**

#### ***1. Promotion of Self-Employment and Job Creation***

By blending entrepreneurship education with apprenticeship, learners acquire not only technical skills but also the entrepreneurial mindset necessary to start and manage their own businesses. This model reduces over-reliance on formal employment and contributes to job creation (Olokundun et al., 2017). Apprentices who understand how to write business plans, access funding, and market their services are better positioned to establish enterprises after their training.

#### ***2. Bridging the Skills and Knowledge Gap***

Apprenticeship alone often focuses narrowly on skill acquisition without imparting the knowledge needed to scale or formalize business operations. Entrepreneurship education fills this

gap by offering insights into financial literacy, market analysis, innovation, and risk management (Gibb, 2002). This dual approach better prepares learners for real-world challenges and enhances business sustainability.

### ***3. Enhancing Innovation and Creativity***

The entrepreneurial component of apprenticeship programs fosters innovation, encouraging apprentices to think beyond traditional methods and develop unique solutions to market demands (Izedonmi & Okafor, 2010). When apprentices are taught to identify and exploit business opportunities, they are more likely to create competitive advantages within their trades.

### ***4. Improving Economic and Community Development***

Integrated apprenticeship and entrepreneurship training can drive community-level development, especially in rural or underserved areas. Trainees are more likely to remain in their communities and contribute to the local economy when they are equipped with both skills and entrepreneurial capability (Akhueomonkhan et al., 2013). This can reduce rural-urban migration and stimulate inclusive growth.

## **Challenges of Integration**

### ***1. Curriculum Incompatibility and Lack of Standardization***

One major challenge is aligning entrepreneurship content with traditional apprenticeship models, which are often informal and unstructured. There may be a lack of standardized curriculum that effectively blends practical skill training with entrepreneurship theory and application (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). Inconsistencies in delivery can result in uneven outcomes among learners.

### ***2. Limited Capacity of Trainers and Mentors***

Most apprenticeship trainers are artisans or technicians who may lack the knowledge or capacity to teach entrepreneurship. This mismatch can limit the depth and quality of entrepreneurial instruction in integrated programs (Chigunta, 2017). Additionally, insufficient training for entrepreneurship educators impairs the effectiveness of the integration.

### ***3. Funding and Resource Constraints***

Effective integration requires funding for learning materials, entrepreneurship workshops, and practical business incubation. Many apprenticeship settings, especially in developing contexts, lack the infrastructure and financial resources to support this dual training model (Okolie et al., 2019). This underfunding leads to suboptimal implementation and outcomes.

### ***4. Low Societal Perception and Support***

In some cultures, both apprenticeship and entrepreneurship are perceived as second-rate alternatives to formal education or white-collar jobs. This stigma can deter young people and their families from participating in integrated programs (Oviawe, 2010). Addressing this requires a shift in societal attitudes and greater advocacy for the value of vocational and entrepreneurial education.

Integrating entrepreneurship into apprenticeship programs holds significant potential for promoting economic empowerment, innovation, and youth employment. However, realizing these benefits requires addressing several challenges, including curriculum development, trainer capacity, resource availability, and societal perceptions. Policymakers, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders must work collaboratively to design and implement programs that are context-specific, inclusive, and responsive to labor market needs.

## **A Framework for Effectively Incorporating Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship Training into the Priestly Formation Curriculum**

The 21st-century priesthood demands more than spiritual leadership it requires practical competence in socio-economic engagement, especially in communities plagued by unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment. Integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the priestly formation curriculum not only empowers clergy to be self-reliant but also positions them as catalysts for community development. The Catholic Church, particularly in Africa, must respond to contemporary needs by equipping seminarians with skills for both spiritual and socio-economic transformation (Okonkwo & Nwagwu, 2023). The inclusion of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training in priestly formation can address several issues:

- Youth unemployment and poverty reduction through church-led enterprise (Onyishi et al., 2022).
- Clergy sustainability amidst declining financial support from traditional offertory systems (Uzundu & Ezeanyika, 2021).
- Role modeling for young people and parishioners to engage in productive ventures (Mugambi, 2020).

## Proposed Framework for Integration

### A. Curriculum Design Components

#### *Component Description*

Entrepreneurship Education	Basic business planning, financial literacy, social enterprise development, ethics in business.
Apprenticeship Training	Hands-on skill acquisition (e.g., ICT, agro-business, media, carpentry, printing) through partnerships with vocational institutions.
Theological-Contextual Linkages	Courses that link theological reflection with practical economics and community development.
Project-Based Learning	Seminary-led business projects and community service ventures.
Mentorship & Spiritual Integration	Pairing seminarians with priest-entrepreneurs and embedding business ethics in spiritual formation.

### B. Implementation Phases

1. Needs Assessment & Stakeholder Engagement (Year 1)
2. Curriculum Development & Pilot Testing (Year 2)
3. Full Integration into Seminary Programs (Year 3+)
4. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback Loop

#### **5. Institutional Support Mechanisms**

**Ecclesiastical Approval & Canonical Guidelines:** Ensure alignment with Canon Law and local episcopal policies (Canon Law Society, 2020).

**Partnerships:** Collaborations with universities, polytechnics, and NGOs specializing in vocational and entrepreneurship education.



**Funding & Resources:** Seed grants from diocesan development agencies or Catholic philanthropic bodies (CAFOD, 2023).

## ***6. Potential Challenges***

Resistance to curriculum change due to traditionalist perspectives.

Resource constraints in underfunded seminaries.

Balancing academic, spiritual, and entrepreneurial training.

These can be mitigated by stakeholder engagement, gradual implementation, and emphasizing the theological basis for social transformation.

## **Theoretical Underpinning**

This framework draws on the following theories:

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993; updated by Nafukho et al., 2021) posits that individuals and societies can enhance economic productivity and personal development through investments in education, skills, and training. The theory views such investments as a way to build human capital—just like financial or physical capital—by increasing a person's value and capacity to contribute meaningfully to society. Applied to entrepreneurial training for seminarians, this theory suggests that providing seminarians with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills increases their capacity to generate income, solve problems, and adapt to changing economic environments. According to Nafukho et al. (2021), human capital development is not only an economic asset but also a social one, supporting holistic development, including spiritual, moral, and leadership dimensions. In this context, investing in entrepreneurial training for seminarians enhances their productivity, self-reliance, and potential to contribute to community development, both within and beyond their religious vocations. It aligns their spiritual mission with sustainable livelihood strategies, promoting a more resilient and socially impactful clergy.

Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006) emphasizes leaders who inspire and motivate followers to exceed their own self-interest for the sake of the group or a greater cause. Such leaders foster innovation, empower others, and drive meaningful change by appealing to values, vision, and purpose. Applied to the training of future priests, this theory suggests that equipping seminarians with transformational leadership qualities such as vision casting, intellectual stimulation, individualized support, and moral integrity prepares them to

inspire innovation and lead positive change in their communities. These priests can become agents of spiritual, social, and even economic transformation, mobilizing others toward collective goals like justice, sustainability, and community development.

Contextual Theology (Bevans, 2020) argues that theology should not be developed in isolation from the lived experiences, cultures, and social realities of people. Instead, it must engage and respond to the specific context in which faith is practiced. Applied to seminary formation, this theory calls for the Church to adapt its training processes to reflect the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental realities of its local context. For example, in regions facing climate change, poverty, or youth unemployment, priestly formation should include relevant teachings such as social justice, environmental stewardship, or entrepreneurship so that future priests can effectively minister and lead in their communities.

### **Research Design:**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable for collecting data from a representative sample of a population to describe the status of an issue or trend in this case, the integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into priestly formation. The study sought to understand current practices, perceptions, needs, and potential challenges and benefits of curriculum integration in seminary education within the Enugu Catholic Diocese.

### **Population of the Study:**

The target population will include:

- ✓ Seminarians in major seminaries within the Enugu Catholic Diocese.
- ✓ Seminary formators (rectors, spiritual directors, academic staff).
- ✓ Diocesan officials (e.g., Vocation Directors, Education Secretaries).
- ✓ Selected clergy members (especially recently ordained priests and mentors).

## Data presentation and analysis

### Presentation of Data

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Seminarians' Perception on Integration of Entrepreneurship Training**

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Entrepreneurship should be part of seminary training	80	4.25	0.68
2. Apprenticeship training can improve the self-reliance of priests	80	4.10	0.72
3. Integrating such training distracts from spiritual formation	80	2.15	0.91
4. Entrepreneurship can help priests manage parish resources effectively	80	4.33	0.60

### Analysis and Interpretation Write-Up

The descriptive analysis of seminarians' perceptions on integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training reveals strong support for curriculum innovation. As shown in Table 1, the majority of seminarians agreed that entrepreneurship should be part of their training (Mean = 4.25, SD = 0.68). This is supported by their belief that apprenticeship training could improve priests' self-reliance (Mean = 4.10). Furthermore, respondents believed that entrepreneurship skills would help priests better manage parish resources (Mean = 4.33). Interestingly, the statement "Integrating such training distracts from spiritual formation" had a low mean score (Mean = 2.15), suggesting that most seminarians disagree with the idea that entrepreneurship training interferes with their core spiritual mission. These findings indicate a positive perception of integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the priestly formation curriculum. The seminarians recognize the practical benefits such training can offer without perceiving it as a threat to their spiritual development.

### **What is the current state of the curriculum used in priestly formation with regard to entrepreneurship and vocational training in the Enugu Catholic Diocese?**

Respondents were asked to rate various statements using a 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Current Curriculum Content**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1. The current curriculum includes entrepreneurship education	80	2.01	0.88	Largely Disagree
2. Vocational/apprenticeship training is part of seminary formation	80	1.89	0.91	Strongly Disagree
3. The curriculum prepares seminarians to be self-reliant post-ordination	80	2.30	0.95	Disagree
4. There are organized workshops/seminars on business or vocational skills	80	2.11	1.00	Disagree
5. Most formators encourage practical skill development	80	3.01	0.85	Neutral

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics on the current state of the curriculum used in priestly formation with respect to entrepreneurship and vocational training.

The responses indicate that entrepreneurship education is largely absent from the seminary curriculum (Mean = 2.01), with similarly low responses for the inclusion of vocational/apprenticeship training (Mean = 1.89). These scores suggest that seminarians perceive a significant gap in skill-based training within their formation. The statement on curriculum preparing seminarians to be self-reliant also received a low mean score (Mean = 2.30), reflecting that respondents do not believe the current curriculum supports self-sustainability or practical skill acquisition. Moreover, organized workshops/seminars on entrepreneurship were perceived as infrequent or non-existent (Mean = 2.11). Interestingly, a neutral rating (Mean = 3.01) was recorded for whether formators encourage practical skill development, possibly indicating individual initiative by some staff rather than institutional policy. These results highlight a lack of structured integration of entrepreneurship and vocational training within the seminary

curriculum of the Enugu Catholic Diocese. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity for curriculum reform.

**What entrepreneurial and vocational skills do seminarians consider relevant and beneficial for inclusion in priestly formation within the Enugu Catholic Diocese?"**

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the relevance of specific skills using a 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Relevant Entrepreneurial and Vocational Skills**

Skill Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Small business management (e.g., managing parish farms or shops)	80	4.35	0.61	Strong Agreement
ICT and digital literacy (e.g., graphic design, social media)	80	4.18	0.72	Strong Agreement
Financial literacy (e.g., budgeting, bookkeeping)	80	4.45	0.55	Strong Agreement
Carpentry, metalwork, and artisan skills	80	3.21	0.93	Moderate Agreement
Agriculture and agro-processing	80	4.10	0.70	Strong Agreement
Tailoring, fashion design, or bead-making	80	3.00	0.89	Neutral
Public speaking, branding, and personal development	80	4.40	0.58	Strong Agreement
Event planning and hospitality management	80	3.95	0.76	Agreement

**Analysis and Interpretation**

Table 3 presents seminarians' perspectives on the relevance of selected entrepreneurial and vocational skills to priestly life and ministry.

Respondents strongly agreed on the importance of financial literacy (Mean = 4.45) and public speaking and personal development (Mean = 4.40), emphasizing the need for priests to manage resources wisely and present themselves effectively in leadership roles. High relevance was also assigned to small business management (Mean = 4.35), ICT skills (Mean = 4.18), and

agriculture/agro-processing (Mean = 4.10), likely reflecting local pastoral and community realities where parishes often run farms or small businesses to support their missions. Lower relevance was perceived for tailoring and fashion design (Mean = 3.00) and carpentry/artisan work (Mean = 3.21), though these still scored above neutral, suggesting they may be considered useful but less essential by most seminarians. This data suggests that seminarians see clear value in practical, entrepreneurial, and digital skills—especially those that can aid parish administration, self-reliance, and community engagement after ordination.

**Formators' responses to a proposed framework/model for incorporating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the priestly formation curriculum in the Enugu Catholic Diocese.**

This table would typically be based on respondents' level of agreement with key elements of a proposed integration model, rated on a 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on a Proposed Framework for Integrating Entrepreneurship and Apprenticeship into Priestly Formation**

Proposed Component of the Framework	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Entrepreneurship should be introduced as a general studies course	80	4.41	0.57	Strong Agreement
2. Seminary curriculum should include periodic vocational workshops	80	4.35	0.60	Strong Agreement
3. Students should choose an area of apprenticeship (e.g., ICT, farming, crafts)	80	4.20	0.65	Strong Agreement
4. Practical skill training should not interfere with spiritual/priestly formation	80	4.10	0.71	Agreement
5. Mentorship and supervision by formators in skill areas should be provided	80	4.28	0.63	Strong Agreement
6. Partnerships should be formed with Catholic-owned enterprises for field training	80	4.50	0.54	Strong Agreement

<b>Proposed Component of the Framework</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
7. Assessment of vocational learning should be part of seminary evaluation	80	4.00	0.78	Agreement

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

Table 5 shows strong support among respondents for the key elements of a proposed framework to integrate entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the priestly formation curriculum.

The highest mean score (Mean = 4.50) was recorded for the suggestion to establish partnerships with Catholic-owned enterprises to provide seminarians with real-world vocational experiences.

Introducing entrepreneurship as a general studies course (Mean = 4.41) and organizing periodic vocational workshops (Mean = 4.35) also received very strong approval.

The idea that seminarians should select a specific area of apprenticeship had a high mean (Mean = 4.20), indicating enthusiasm for personalized, practical skill development.

There was also agreement that vocational training should not interfere with spiritual formation (Mean = 4.10), suggesting the need for a carefully balanced curriculum.

The inclusion of vocational learning in evaluation processes received a slightly lower but still supportive rating (Mean = 4.00), reflecting moderate openness to formal assessment in this area.

Overall, these responses validate the feasibility of a structured model that incorporates entrepreneurship and vocational skills into priestly formation in a way that complements, rather than competes with, spiritual and pastoral development.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study revealed significant insights into the perceptions, feasibility, and potential benefits of integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the curriculum of priestly formation within the Enugu Catholic Diocese. The study explored perspectives from seminarians, formators, clergy, and education experts to understand the value and challenges associated with such curriculum enhancement.

Firstly, the results showed a strong consensus among respondents that modern-day priests need practical life skills in addition to theological and pastoral knowledge. The growing socioeconomic challenges in Nigeria, including youth unemployment, poverty, and dependence on external support, have underscored the importance of equipping future priests with

entrepreneurial skills. Many respondents argued that entrepreneurship education could empower priests to manage church resources efficiently, support parishioners through job creation initiatives, and serve as role models for youth empowerment.

Secondly, apprenticeship training was perceived as complementary to academic and spiritual formation. Respondents noted that practical exposure to vocations such as carpentry, farming, tailoring, media production, or ICT could foster humility, discipline, and creativity among seminarians. It could also reduce the over-reliance of clergy on external donations or stipends by promoting self-reliance and sustainability within pastoral settings.

The study further found that while the idea of integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training is widely accepted in principle, implementation poses several challenges. These include an already congested seminary curriculum, limited funding, lack of trained personnel in vocational skills, and potential resistance from traditionalists who may see such training as a distraction from the core spiritual mission. However, many formators and clergy expressed willingness to embrace curriculum innovation, provided it is well-structured, aligned with the Church's mission, and supported by the diocesan leadership.

In addition, some seminaries in Enugu Diocese have already informally introduced skill acquisition activities, such as farming, media training, and small-scale crafts, suggesting that integration is not entirely new but needs to be institutionalized and better coordinated. The study emphasized that a policy framework and collaboration with entrepreneurship development agencies or faith-based organizations could enhance effectiveness.

In conclusion, the findings affirm the relevance and timeliness of incorporating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into priestly formation. It is a proactive approach to forming priests who are not only spiritual leaders but also socially responsive agents of transformation. The Enugu Catholic Diocese stands to benefit from such integration by nurturing clergy who are economically empowered, pastorally effective, and holistically formed to meet contemporary challenges.

## **Conclusion**

This study has examined the relevance, feasibility, and implications of integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the curriculum of priestly formation in the Enugu Catholic Diocese. The findings indicate that such integration is not only timely but



essential in preparing priests to meet the multifaceted demands of contemporary ministry. In a society increasingly characterized by economic hardship, high unemployment rates, and limited opportunities for youth, the Church must play a proactive role in equipping its leaders with practical skills for self-reliance and community empowerment. By incorporating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into seminary education, the Diocese can nurture priests who are not only spiritually grounded but also socially and economically responsive.

The study revealed strong support among stakeholders for this curriculum enhancement, recognizing its potential to promote self-sufficiency, creativity, and pastoral effectiveness. However, challenges such as curriculum overload, limited resources, and resistance to change must be carefully addressed through strategic planning, diocesan support, and collaboration with skilled professionals and institutions.

In conclusion, integrating entrepreneurship and apprenticeship into priestly formation is a visionary step toward holistic clergy development. It aligns with the Church's mission to serve the whole person—spiritually, socially, and economically—and prepares priests to be effective shepherds and agents of transformation in today's dynamic world. The Enugu Catholic Diocese, by embracing this initiative, can set a precedent for other dioceses in Nigeria and beyond.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to facilitate the effective integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into the curriculum of priestly formation within the Enugu Catholic Diocese:

### **1) Curriculum Review and Development**

The seminary curriculum should be reviewed and expanded to include structured modules on entrepreneurship and apprenticeship. This integration should be aligned with the core values of priestly formation, ensuring that it complements spiritual, pastoral, and academic development.

### **2) Capacity Building for Formators**

Seminary formators and educators should be trained in basic entrepreneurship education and vocational skill facilitation. This will enable them to mentor seminarians effectively and model self-reliance and creativity.

### **3) Partnerships with Vocational Institutions and NGOs**

The Diocese should establish partnerships with vocational training centers, entrepreneurship development agencies, and faith-based NGOs to provide technical support, resource persons, and apprenticeship opportunities for seminarians.

### **4) Infrastructure and Resource Provision**

Seminaries should be equipped with the necessary infrastructure—such as workshops, farms, studios, and ICT centers—to support hands-on learning in various skills and trades.

### **5) Pilot Programs in Selected Seminaries**

A phased approach should be adopted by initiating pilot programs in selected seminaries within the Diocese. Lessons learned from these pilots can guide wider implementation and curriculum standardization.

### **6) Institutional Support and Policy Framework**

The Diocesan leadership should develop a clear policy framework that supports the integration of entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training into priestly formation. This includes allocation of funding, periodic evaluation, and setting measurable goals.

### **7) Encourage Innovation and Creativity**

Seminarians should be encouraged to initiate and manage small-scale projects or enterprises as part of their formation. These practical experiences will enhance their confidence, leadership, and problem-solving abilities.

### **8) Monitoring and Evaluation**

Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be instituted to assess the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum, identify gaps, and ensure continuous improvement.

### **9) Promote Theological Reflection on Work and Dignity of Labour**

Entrepreneurship and apprenticeship should not be taught merely as economic tools but also within the theological context of human dignity, stewardship, and service. This ensures alignment with the Church's mission and values.

## 10) Sensitization and Advocacy

There is a need to sensitize stakeholders—including clergy, laity, and seminary boards—on the importance of holistic priestly formation that incorporates practical skills. Advocacy can help dispel misconceptions and promote broader acceptance.

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