

JOURNAL OF AFRICAN ARTS & CULTURE

KIDENDA SANKOFAISM AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA'S JUA KALI SECTOR

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CITATION: Kidenda, M.C. (2026). Kidenda Sankofaism and human capital development in Kenya's Jua Kali sector. *Journal of African Arts and Culture*, 9(2), 346-357.

Abstract

The Jua Kali sector (JKS) plays an integral role in the growth and development of the Kenyan economy. The sector employs more than 83% of the total workforce and contributes about 18% of GDP. While the sector is renowned for its resilience and job-creation capacity, it faces a myriad of skills development challenges, including overreliance on traditional apprenticeships, limited digital literacy, weak managerial competencies, and minimal formal training from TVET institutions. This paper examined the application of Sankofaism as a decolonial strategy for enhancing human capital development in the JKS. The paper draws on the extant literature to establish that "Productive Sankofarism" supports the selective retrieval of pre-colonial craftsmanship, indigenous knowledge, and communitarian values, while simultaneously integrating modern competencies, including digital marketing, financial management, and Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET). The study also established deficit narrative associated with the Jua Kali sector has promoted Eurocentric formalisation. The adoption of Sankofaism reverses this neocolonial approach by repositioning the sector as a site of African innovation and ingenuity. Additionally, the findings suggested that Sankofaism validates traditional apprenticeship as a legitimate pedagogy. The concept also supports the constructs and ideology of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which is necessary for labour mobility within the sector. However, critical application of Sankofaism is necessary for avoiding the perpetuation of harmful norms such as gender exclusion. In sum, Sankofaism offers a robust framework for hybrid skills development that can work effectively with both CBET and RPL. Therefore, Sankofaism should be integrated into TVET curricula, communitarian cooperatives, and gender-inclusive retrieval practices.

Keywords: Sankofaism, Jua Kali sector, decoloniality, skills development, TVET curricula, Kenya

1. Introduction

The informal sector, or rather the Jua Kali sector (JKS), is arguably the engine of the Kenyan economy, as it is the key source of employment and livelihoods for millions of Kenyans. The term “jua kali” means the “hot sun” and originally describes the open-air workshops of artisans without permanent structures or protection (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi, 2026). The sector is currently synonymous with the informal economy, which encompasses a diverse range of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) engaged in manufacturing, trade, services, and agribusiness (Kidenda, 2021; Wamalwa, 2021). At the outset, the sector was dismissed as a temporary phenomenon that would soon disappear with industrialisation; It has, however, remained resilient and dynamic and has outperformed the formal sector in terms of job creation (Hino et al., 2024; Momanyi, 2026; Zepeda et al., 2013).

Some of the salient features of the sector include low entry barrier small scale operations under a general lack of formal regulation or registration (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi, 2026). Most enterprises in the sector operate from temporary shelters and often lack permanent legal titles to their workspaces, which makes them susceptible to harassment by authorities (Momanyi et al., 2024; Wamalwa, 2021). Enterprises are typically labour-intensive and rely on manual activities to develop products (KNBS, 2020; Momanyi, 2026). The sector relies on a traditional apprenticeship for skill development in which knowledge is passed from master craftspeople to trainees through observation and imitation (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi, 2026; Momanyi et al., 2024). The artisans use locally available materials to produce essential goods such as domestic utensils and farm tools (Kidenda, 2021; Wamalwa, 2021). Although the sector lacks formal registration, there is a high degree of informal formality, with artisans paying local user levies and maintaining official interactions with local government agencies (Hino et al., 2024).

The JKS is considered the Mainstay of job creation in Kenya (Momanyi, 2026), as it employs about 15 million people, representing more than 83% of the total workforce (Kidenda, 2021; KNBS, 2020; Momanyi, 2026). The sector creates more than 80% of all new jobs in the economy annually and serves as a critical safety net for about 800,000 youth entering the labour market each year (ATPS, 2024; Momanyi, 2026). The sector’s contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is about 18% (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi, 2026; Momanyi et al., 2024), and is considered a critical pillar for the realisation of Kenya's Vision 2030, which is a national brand print for transforming Kenya into an industrialised middle-income country (ATPS, 2024; Republic of Kenya, 2008). More importantly, the sector provides affordable goods and services to low-income earners (Kidenda, 2021; Wamalwa, 2021) and fosters innovation through the production of essential items such as “jikos” (stoves), “sufurias” (pots), and animal-drawn carts that are vital for both rural and abandoned survival (Kidenda, 2021). Most enterprises in the sector are not just for subsistence; they are vibrant, resilient, and stable entities that provide owners with a degree of autonomy and freedom not found in formal wage employment (Hino et al., 2024).

The sector, however, faces various challenges, including limited access to credit, with about 60% of enterprises relying on personal savings because they lack collateral to borrow from financial institutions (Wamalwa, 2021; Wamalwa et al., 2020). Enterprises lack reliable infrastructure, including electricity, clean water, and adequate storage facilities (Kidenda, 2021; Wamalwa, 2021). They are often at loggerheads with local authorities in urban areas due to a lack of land tenure for the enterprises (Wamalwa, 2021; Momanyi, 2026; Aloyce, 2020).

The enterprises grapple with cheap imported products from Japan and China (Momanyi, 2026; Wamalwa, 2021; Abegunrin & Manyeruke, 2020), which intensify local competition, considering the artisans often produce identical items that saturate the market (Kidenda, 2021; Wamalwa, 2021). Furthermore, enterprises experience a high mortality rate, with about three out of five new businesses collapsing within a few months or years after inception (Wamalwa et al., 2020), whereas those that progress fail to survive past a decade due to poor strategic planning and a lack of market diversification (Momanyi, 2026).

Most specifically, the sector faces various challenges in skill development. For one, whereas about 83% of artisans acquire their skills through traditional apprenticeship, the method lacks the theoretical depth, leading to a cycle of poor skills development in which artisans lack the competence to handle complex tasks (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi, 2026). The apprentices acquire knowledge and technical skills that are limited to the level of the master trainers (Momanyi, 2026; Bardak & Rosso, 2019). Secondly, there is a profound lack of digital literacy for enterprises in the sector. Whereas 80% of the artisans have smartphones, about 31% use digital platforms to brand and market their products and services (Momanyi et al., 2024). These limit their online visibility and prevent them from leveraging modern ecommerce opportunities (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi et al., 2024). Besides, most enterprises lack strategic planning and recording competencies, and the owners therefore operate hand-to-mouth (Momanyi, 2026). For example, about 79% of business owners in the sector have reported challenges with bookkeeping, which is essential for accessing credit and ensuring the long-term growth of enterprises (Wamalwa, 2021). Research has also revealed that workers in the sector who have off-the-job training (professional schooling) earn about 21% more than self-taught workers or those who have completed a traditional apprenticeship (Torm, 2024).

They face a challenge in skills development, as the education system focuses on preparing graduates for formal labour market, that are incidentally shrinking. This leaves informal workers without the essential technical design skills and business management skills (ATPS, 2024; Kidenda, 2021; Munene, 2021). Only about 12.7% of artisans in the sector have acquired formal training from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions (Momanyi et al., 2024). Many artisans are highly skilled but lack formal certification, which prevents them from accessing higher-paying opportunities or bidding on government tenders (Momanyi, 2026). The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy framework aims to address this by validating the skills artisans have acquired through experience; however, its implementation and awareness remain limited (ATPS, 2024; Momanyi et al., 2024; KNQA, 2020). Therefore, this paper discusses the application of Sankofaism as a strategy for enhancing skills acquisition and development in the informal sector, particularly the Jua Kali sector in Kenya.

2. Methods

This study adopted a qualitative desktop review approach to examine the applicability of Sankofaism as a decolonial framework for human capital development within Kenya's Jua Kali Sector (JKS). The study relied exclusively on secondary data drawn from scholarly literature, policy documents, government reports, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) publications, and other relevant academic sources relating to informal sector development, indigenous knowledge systems, decolonial theory, Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET), and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The review was

guided by an interpretivist perspective, which emphasises understanding social phenomena through the meanings, values, and experiences embedded within particular cultural and historical contexts. This philosophical orientation was considered appropriate because the study sought to explore how Sankofaism can serve as a culturally grounded framework for rethinking skills development and knowledge production within the Jua Kali sector. Relevant literature was identified through systematic searches of academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and institutional repositories. Sources were selected based on their relevance to indigenous knowledge systems, African-centred educational philosophies, vocational skills development, informal economies, and decolonial scholarship. Particular attention was given to studies addressing traditional apprenticeship systems, labour mobility, entrepreneurship, skills recognition, and TVET reforms in Africa.

Data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The selected literature was reviewed, coded, and categorised into recurring themes relating to indigenous craftsmanship, traditional apprenticeship, communitarian values, digital competencies, CBET, RPL, and the formalisation of the Jua Kali sector. Through a process of critical synthesis, the study examined the extent to which Sankofaism provides a framework for integrating indigenous knowledge with contemporary skills requirements. The thematic analysis also enabled the identification of opportunities, limitations, and policy implications associated with applying Sankofa principles to human capital development within the sector. To enhance the credibility of the review, sources were critically evaluated for relevance, authenticity, and scholarly rigour. The findings presented in the paper therefore represent a synthesis of current knowledge and theoretical perspectives on decolonial skills development and the future transformation of the Jua Kali sector.

3. Review

3.1 Skills Development in the Jua Kali Sector

Skills development in the JKS is characterised by reliance on experiential learning and a significant gap between traditional methods and modern industrial requirements. Most artisans in the sector acquire their skills through traditional apprenticeship (Kidenda, 2021; Wamalwa, 2021); yet encounter various systemic challenges in digital managerial and technical competencies (Kidenda, 2021), which hinder their transition into high-growth enterprises (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi, 2026; Wamalwa, 2021). This is the primary mode of skills acquisition in the sector through which about 86.3% of artisans have gained their technical skills (Momanyi, 2026; Momanyi et al., 2024). Traditional apprenticeship is based on tacit and tactile learning, where the apprentice acquires knowledge and skills from master craftspeople through observation, imitation, and face-to-face interaction, with minimal theoretical instruction (Kidenda, 2021). The method is valued for its low barrier to entry on social networking benefits (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi, 2026), but often results in a cycle of poor skills development (Kidenda, 2021). The apprentices are limited by their teachers' knowledge, who often lack up-to-date technical expertise or best business practices for open (Bardak & Rosso, 2019; Momanyi, 2026).

Conversely, only 12.7% of artisans have received formal training in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions (Momanyi, 2026; Momanyi et al., 2024). Nonetheless, there is a persistent educational mismatch between formal curricula and the practical needs of the artisans in the informal labour market (ATPS, 2024; Kidenda, 2021). A

formal education system has historically focused on preparing graduates for their increasingly shrinking formal sector. This has left many Jua Kali artisans deficient in the design, planning, and business skills required for developing competitive products (ATPS, 2024; Kidenda, 2021; Munene, 2021). Besides, many artisans consider TVET training as too theoretical compared to the immediate practical application apprenticeship offers (Momanyi, 2026). The lack of managerial and financial skills among artisans is another critical deficiency that undermines the growth of their enterprises. According to the Informal Sector Skills and Occupations Survey (ISSOS), financial management, marketing, and record keeping are the leading skills in the informal enterprises (KNBS, 2020). For instance, about 79% of artisans at the Kamukunji Cluster in Nairobi County identified bookkeeping as a significant problem (Wamalwa, 2021). This deficit is a key barrier to growth since financial institutions typically require enterprises to present financial statements before they can access credit (Momanyi, 2026; Wamalwa et al., 2020). The Artisanal Enterprises have therefore expanded laterally instead of vertically, due to a lack of strategic planning and efficient record-keeping, which inhibits their scalability (Momanyi, 2026).

The digital skills gap also represents another significant challenge for the artisans. Notably, about 80% of artisans have smartphones, but only about that 31% use them for business practices such as customer relationship management and online marketing (Momanyi et al., 2024). Most enterprises rely on roadside displays or word of mouth, which limits their visibility to the broader consumer market and their capacity to leverage e-commerce opportunities (Kidenda, 2021; Momanyi et al., 2024). This creates a need for digital innovation that could enable the artisans to market online and reach wider audiences (Momanyi, 2026). Studies have shown that formal training yields substantial economic returns for workers. For instance, workers with off-the-job training from formal institutions are about 21% more than self-taught workers. Besides, on-the-job and informal training yield about 16% premium (Torm, 2024). Informal workers' associations have played an integral role in facilitating access to training through learning institutions and providing flexible payment plans for their members (Torm, 2024; Riisgaard, 2021). Therefore, implementing the Competency-based Education and Training (CBET) model is necessary to enhance artisans' knowledge and skills (Kidenda, 2021). CBET is a skills-focused, modern education and training approach that prioritises the development of practical skills, knowledge, and worker behaviour instead of merely acquiring abstract or theoretical knowledge (Kibet et al., 2025). CBET is essentially a practical approach to education in which learners are required to apply learned concepts to perform tasks about specified occupational standards to demonstrate their understanding (Chepsiror & Kisilu, 2025; Jwan, 2022). CBET curricula equip the learners with specific attitudes, values, and competencies essential for real-world employment and community service (Mwang'ombe, 2021). Therefore, under the CBET framework, general competence involves applying knowledge and skills to various situations in a given occupation. This ensures graduates are ready for the job market without requiring further training (Jwan, 2022; Kibet et al., 2025).

The CBET education system is thus expected to address skills mismatches, as it is not exam-oriented like its predecessor, the 8-4-4 system, which failed to equip graduates with relevant skills for the job market (Jwan, 2022; Mwang'ombe, 2021). CBET is also expected to address the attendant weaknesses of traditional apprenticeship (Kibet et al., 2025) and also align with the aspirations of Kenya Vision 2030 to attain industrialisation and a middle-income status by 2030 (Jwan, 2022; Kibet et al., 2025). More importantly, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

has been proposed as a viable policy and pedagogical shift for validating the competencies workers have acquired through experience (ATPS, 2024; Momanyi, 2026; KNQA, 2020). RPL is a structured process used in identifying accessing and certifying skills and competencies one has acquired through informal or non-formal learning (HRMPEB, 2025; KNQA, 2020; Nakata et al., 2021; Raciti et al., 2024). Through RPL, artisans with viable skills but lacking formal documentation can receive credits or admission to higher education and vocational training systems (Raciti et al., 2024; Nakata et al., 2021). Therefore, RPL is expected to improve their labour mobility and enable them to participate in government tenders (ATPS, 2024; KNQA, 2020; Momanyi, 2026).

CBET is closely connected to RPL, as its assessment model aims to assess mastery of competencies regardless of how or where the artisans have acquired them (Jwan, 2022). The RPL framework includes specific assessment criteria for evaluating learning that occurred outside a formal setting (Chepsiror & Kisilu, 2025). This is especially important for the artisans in the Jua Kali sector, many of whom acquire skills through traditional apprenticeship. The standardised qualification framework outlined by the Kenya National Qualification Framework (KNQF) allows these artisans to get their skills validated and aligned with former qualifications (Jwan, 2022). CBET and RPL eliminate time-based barriers to skills progression and provide artisans with pathways to enter formal education and pursue training up to the university level (Jwan, 2022; Chepsiror & Kisilu, 2025). This discourse aimed to examine the application of Sankofaism in skills development in the Jua Kali sector, how it manifests, and also how it could be used to address the persisting challenges.

3.2 Sankofaism

Sankofaism is a Ghanaian concept among the Akan people that means “go back and get it” (Faniyan, 2025; Gumbo, 2026). In other words, the concept advocates examining the past to learn lessons that help make today and tomorrow better. The concept has become a multifaceted methodological and philosophical approach, purposed to reclaim African indigenous knowledge, personhood, and agency in a globalised post-colonial world (Ajei, 2019; Faniyan, 2025; Gumbo, 2026). Traditionally, the concept was symbolised by a bird that looks backwards to retrieve an egg. However, contemporary scholarship has further developed the concept into more rigorous frameworks, such as "Critical Sankofaism" or "Productive Sankofaism" to evade the pitfalls of blind nostalgia (Faniyan, 2025; Kong, 2021). The extant literature indicates that Sankofaism has been applied across a broad range of fields. In education studies have explored its use in decolonising arts education (Faniyan, 2025), redefining rural basic school success through community synergy (Anlimachie et al., 2026), and centering indigenous knowledge in higher education (Gumbo, 2026). In Early Childhood Development (ECD), Sankofaism has been used to challenge Eurocentric "best practices" and "schoolification" by integrating traditional values for raising children (Anlimachie et al., 2026; Pence et al., 2021a; Pence et al., 2021b).

Furthermore, the concept has been applied to Mental health and ethics, particularly in the evaluation of problematic gender norms and personhood regarding male suicide in Ghana (Kong, 2021). In healthcare education, Sankofaism is proposed as a framework for addressing incivility in nursing through adopting ‘ubuntu’ and ‘botho’ (Vink & Sefotho, 2025). The concept has also been used in gerontology to guide the formulation and implementation of healthy ageing policies (Stanley & Chukwuorji, 2024). In political science, the concept informs

decolonisation of leadership and reconstruction (Ajei, 2019; Slater, 2019). Furthermore, the literature has theorised the concept as an African-centred research methodology that advocates relational ethical accountability over rigid institutional compliance (Ahmed & Gyamerah, 2025; Gyamerah, 2024).

The extant literature concurs that Sankofaism is fundamentally feature-oriented and not a regressive return to an idealised past (Ahmed & Gyamerah, 2025; Faniyan, 2025). Scholars agree that the egg in the bird's beak represents the future, or rather, the precious knowledge retrieved from the past that can solve contemporary challenges (Anlimachie et al., 2026; Gumbo, 2026; Slater, 2019). The extant literature also rejects Eurocentric hegemony and the colonality of knowledge. Scholars have instead advocated for the validation of indigenous knowledge systems as legitimate socio-academic resources (Ajei, 2019; Gumbo, 2026; Preston, 2025). However, past studies have differed in their perspectives on the theoretical framing and the degree of my hybridity. For example, whereas some studies have advocated "Productive Sankofarism" as a selective retrieval process (Faniyan, 2025), others have reiterated "Critical Sankofaism," which serves as an internal normative resource for uprooting harmful traditional seeds, such as patriarchal expectations (Kong, 2021). Scholars also have differed methodologically, with some considering Sankofa as a way of meshing indigenous and Western knowledge, whereas others have framed the concept as a tool for radical decolonisation to delink from Western validation (Ahmed & Gyamerah, 2025; Preston, 2025). Besides, while some scholars have focused on systematic institutional change (Vink & Sefotho, 2025), others have emphasised lived individual experiences of the African person (Ajei, 2019; Kong, 2021).

The reviewed literature has also revealed significant knowledge gaps. For one, the reviewed literature tends to popularise Sankofa, making it a performative or superficial symbol of identity affirmation in the diaspora instead of a rigorous analytical tool (Faniyan, 2025; Kong, 2021). Besides, if the concept is not critically sifted, it could result in the preservation of oppressive traditional structures under the pretext of cultural renaissance (Kong, 2021). A major gap exists in the application of Sankofa principles to skills development in the informal sector. Previous studies have mentioned examples of indigenous pedagogy, such as apprenticeship-based participatory learning in rural schooling (Anlimachie et al., 2026) and dhow-making in Zambia (Gumbo, 2026). There is, however, no empirical research that specifically connects Sankofaism with the modern informal economy. Existing studies have focused on formalising indigenous knowledge within existing Western-style institutions such as universities or formal nursing programs (Gumbo, 2026; Vink & Sefotho, 2025). The existing literature has thus failed to critically examine how Sankofaism can restructure vocational training for workers in the informal sector, who are more inclined to adopt neoliberal technical knowledge and skills (Ajei, 2019; Pence et al., 2021b). This makes it imperative to investigate how "Productive Sankofarism" can leverage traditional guilds and community-based skills transmission to drive current economic productivity without relying entirely on the Western economic models (Faniyan, 2025; Pence et al., 2021a). Therefore, whereas previous studies have successfully established that Sankofaism is an effective decolonial framework across education and social ethics, its application for vocational skills development and economic empowerment in the informal sector remains theoretical at best, and largely peripheral (Ajei, 2019; Anlimachie et al., 2026; Pence et al., 2021b).

4. Findings and Discussions

The integration of Sankofaism into the Jua Kali skills development provides a robust decolonial framework for revitalising this sector (Asante, 2022; Pence et al., 2021a). Essentially, Sankofaism positions Jua Kali as a site of African ingenuity and indigenous technical mastery (Ajei, 2019; Anlimachie et al., 2026) and distances it from the deficit narrative that prioritises Eurocentric formalisation. The adoption of "Productive Sankofaism" into the Jua Kali sector constitutes a selective adaptation and retrieval of pre-colonial technological legacies and design concepts (Faniyan, 2025). Traditionally, African societies had rich and sophisticated metallurgy in brass and bronze casting, which they integrated into their social functions (Faniyan, 2025). Jua Kali artisans can draw on these indigenous intellectual legacies as an alternative to Western-style technical skills. The artisans will, in this way, adopt a form of craftsmanship that is aptly reflective of African identity and aesthetics (Ajei, 2019; Faniyan, 2025). The process of retrieval is by no means a nostalgic return; it is rather an innovative springboard that combines indigenous heritage with global advancement (Faniyan, 2025; Gumbo, 2026). This results in hybrid solutions for problems in the contemporary African context. The transformation of skills through informal apprenticeship is centered in the Jua Kali sector. While the formal colonial education system denigrates this model as uncivilised or backwards, Sankofaism validates it (Anlimachie et al., 2026; Gumbo, 2026). The traditional apprenticeship requires master craftspeople to share their craft knowledge and experience with the new apprentice. This is a form of looking back to borrow knowledge and skills for today and tomorrow. The approach encourages participatory learning, where the apprentice acquires skills on-site through observation and enactment (Gumbo, 2026; Anlimachie et al., 2026).

The adoption of Sankofa can foster historical consciousness, enabling artisans to correct past craft and design mistakes and plan for a self-determined future (Ahmed & Gyamerah, 2025; Slater, 2019). This may involve addressing unhealthy competition amongst the artisans, which leaves their enterprises susceptible to middleman exploitation and devoid of competition. The artisan can thus look back and adopt the Harambee spirit of pulling together, thereby generating synergy in the design and development of products and services that not only advance African authenticity but are also competitively placed in the marketplace. The integration of this value can help the Jua Kali enterprises resist market logics that often commodify culture. They can instead band their energies toward "communitarianism," in which each person's identity is formed through communal integration (Ajei, 2019; Faniyan, 2025). The critical application of Sankofa is essential for ensuring the Jua Kali sector does not preserve harmful traditional structures (Kong, 2021). Notably, the Sankofa bird "spits out rotten seeds," and therefore artisans and policymakers must critically scrutinise past practices to ascertain those appropriate for fundamental human needs today (Kong, 2021; Stanley & Chukwuorji, 2024). This may entail challenging restrictive gender norms and patriarchal expectations that exclude women from certain technical domains in the Jua Kali sector (Kong, 2021). Sankofaism centres on African humanism, which means that the welfare of human beings counts above gold or cloth. The adoption of this concept in the sector involves adopting egalitarian norms of moral regard and assistance (Kong, 2021; Vink & Sefotho, 2025).

The Jua Kali sector relies on informal networks and verbal agreements. Sankofaism provides a methodological anchor for this dynamic, legitimising "relational ethical accountability" rather than rigid procedural formalism (Ahmed & Gyamerah, 2025). The trading environment in the Jua Kali sector involves verbal consent and communal witnessing, which Ahmed & Gyamerah

(2025) consider authentic modes of engagement grounded in dialogue. This approach is effective in providing artisans with forums to return to ancestral wisdom that encourages spiritual harmony and togetherness (Vink & Sefotho, 2025).

The leadership of the Jua Kali sector could adopt Sankofa wisdom to address "reconstruction challenges" such as corruption and mismanagement (Slater, 2019). This will be important in influencing national policy. Notably, traditional African leadership structures prioritised the community over individual gain (Slater, 2019). Jua Kali associations could leverage these traditional structures to adopt a sense of accountability and transparency, thereby establishing robust internal justice mechanisms that will spill over into broader democratic development (Slater, 2019).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Sankofaism offers an effective, transformational decolonial framework for skills development in Kenya's Jua Kali sector (JKS). The concept moves away from viewing the sector as deficient, instead validating the transmission of indigenous knowledge, even as it enables the transformation of modern competencies. The sector's reliance on traditional master-apprentice models invariably lacks digital, managerial, and theoretical depth. These gaps are, however, bridged through "Productive Sankofaism" by retrieving pre-colonial craftsmanship and communitarian values such as Harambee, and eliminating harmful norms like gender exclusion. However, the critical application of Sankofaism is necessary to avoid adopting the concept merely to remember the past. This discourse, therefore, confirmed that integrating CBET and RPL through a Sankofaist lens can formalise tacit skills, enhance labor mobility, and align JKS with Kenya's Vision 2030. This paper, therefore, recommends integrating Sankofaism into TVET curricula and RPL frameworks to certify tacit skills while upholding indigenous pedagogies. The paper also recommends establishing apprenticeship programs that blend traditional observation-based learning with modern competencies, including digital literacy, bookkeeping, and e-commerce modules. Additionally, the paper recommends the retrieval of egalitarian traditional norms to dismantle patriarchal barriers that limit women's participation in technical Jua Kali trades.

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