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Literary Scholarship, Literary Criticism: What's in a Name?

Amechi N. Akwanya

Abstract

The use of the term 'literary scholarship' or 'literary studies' by workers and researchers in literary phenomena is not always reflexive, and pointing back at the *literary* as the direct object of the intellectual activity. This is not new, but goes a long way back to the first introduction of modern literature in Anglo-American university studies, and is part of the heritage of humanist philosophy. This paper is an enquiry about theory in literary studies, and therefore will look into a number of philosophical and theoretical accounts of literary phenomena to draw materials to substantiate the argument that at its core, literary scholarship or literary theory has an account of what literature consists of. This knowledge of the essential nature of literature, which is that it is art – of a certain kind, namely mimesis by means of language alone is what should guide the selection of works that are taught and researched in formal studies of literature.

Keywords: Aristotelianism, English studies, humanism, literary art, literary criticism, literary theory, the novel

1. Introduction

English studies was a humanist foundation in Nigeria. In both the University of Ibadan and the University of Nigeria, the oldest of the universities, literary studies was housed in the Department of English, and the approach to literature was Arnoldian humanism, and literature as 'a criticism of life' – 'the end and aim of all literature, if one considers it attentively' (Arnold 249) – was the central doctrine. Of course, the department of English as the domicile of literary studies was more or less the norm in the Anglo-American university tradition at the time; hence the American John Crowe Ransom was to state in his 'Criticism Inc.' that it is from the professors of literature, in this country,

the professors of English for the most part, that I should hope eventually for the erection of intelligent standards of criticism' (229). In Ransom's view, what was going on as literary scholarship was not 'intelligent criticism', and needed to be substituted. He was to go on to author a book that gave a name to a new movement in literary studies called 'the New Criticism'.

Today in Nigeria that question of 'intelligent criticism' apparently has not gone away. Scholars, however, continue to publish essays in literary journals without a sense of anything being amiss. And there are so-called 'literary theories' which drive these essays. Some of these 'theories' were in use in 1937 when Professor John Crowe Ransom published his 'Criticism, Inc.' and called them in the essay diversionary. According to him in 1937, 'The most important recent diversion from the orthodox course of literary studies was that undertaken by the New Humanists' (230). Marxism was another. The common trait of these diversionary engagements is that they 'were, and are, moralists; more accurately, historians and advocates of a certain moral system' (231). Some of the Nigerian universities have made changes in what used to cover 'English studies', presumably to give a clearer representation to the content of their programme as comprising English language studies and literature study. There may also have been an intention to be politically correct, as the national education policy had also created a divide between literature and English, giving the pride of place to English language. But whether the outcome of the self-questioning that took place within the discipline in the middle part of the twentieth century in the West has been taken onboard is open to question.

The demand for an 'intelligent criticism' was in fact to give rise to much brain-storming and theoretic discourse especially in America, but with mixed results. For example, what Ransom called *diversionary* because it paid lip service to the literary work, only to take off towards something that seemed to it more important, more pertinent and relevant to life to which the literary work and art itself must minister, or failing that stand down. This is very much in evidence in the practice of literary scholarship in Nigeria today. Some other contemporaries of Professor Ransom who found a challenge in the direct object of criticism toiled for an instrument of analysis of this object. Enquiries into the tools and methods of studying literature proliferated, both in the aspect of the *diversions* and literary theory itself. The path that Nigerian literary scholarship subsequently took seems to have been overwhelmingly the pursuit of things of importance which literature could be shown to provide a path to, not literature itself, although this was the very thing that provided the content of the academic discipline. If the alarm has been raised, and as Terry Eagleton puts it, yet 'such acts continue today, apparently in all their traditional confidence, [it] is doubtless a sign that the crisis of the critical institution has either not been deeply enough registered, or is being actively evaded' (Preface).

Organized Body of Knowledge

The need that Ransom is speaking about in his 'Criticism, Inc.' was probably first identified by the Formalists in Russia (1914-1916). Some of the first to take it up in America were the Aristotelians of the University of Chicago. It arose because although literature was, and has remained part and parcel of culture, and its public, according to Arnold Kettle, is divided between the elite and the masses, and their opposed interests and tastes:

> 'good' literature is (not unfairly) associated in the minds of millions with obscurity, affectation and all the intellectual and social snobbery of high-browism, while popularity has ceased to be an issue with the majority of serious writers and is even regarded with suspicion and contempt (64).

There are 'serious' writers; and there are 'popular' writers. And their productions are held in mutual disdain by their respective audiences. However, since the novel had also become a matter for academic study in a university setting, where it could not be that '"good" literature' was automatically acceptable and deserving of study, while 'popular literature' was not, and since novels were not being accepted indifferently into the curriculum, how was the choice being made what to include and what to exclude? It was not enough that there should be a standard for ascertaining worth – worth, strictly defined for purposes of research and teaching, that standard needed to be objectively and transparently established. There could still be individual scholars who believed that their ideas were not to be confined to the classroom, but should also guide the general public in using that publicly available resource.

But Eagleton was to observe ruefully in the 1980s that:

> criticism today lacks all substantive social function. It is either part of the public relations branch of the literary industry, or a matter wholly internal to the academies (Preface).

His preferred position is that criticism should be sustained as a social function; as such it can be nothing but what is recommended as beneficent to the public, a 'type of unpaid public relations, part of the requirements in any large corporate undertaking' (Eagleton107, quoting Peter Hohendahl). Given the complicity between the social functioning of criticism and 'the public relations branch of the literary industry', criticism as determined by Eagleton is secretly an affiliate of the industry-owning class, and propagator of their values. It leaves us with another determination of criticism, the one we are concerned with in this paper, which is 'a matter wholly internal to the academies'. This is the criticism that Northrop Frye calls 'science, 'not a "pure" or "exact" science, of course', but as a knowledge department, 'no one doubts that scientific principles are involved'. It is this scientific element, that is, its systematic methods in accumulating and transmitting knowledge about

some specific *object*, that 'distinguishes it from literary parasitism on the one hand, and the superimposed critical attitude on the other. The presence of science in any subject changes its character from the casual to the causal, from the random and intuitive to the systematic, as well as safeguarding the integrity of that subject from external invasions' (7).

In spite of Frye, however, and the neo-Aristotelians and the New Critics, the professional community in the Anglo-American tradition has not chosen, apparently, to take a clear stand on criticism between social functionality and the 'matter wholly internal to the academies'. In Nigerian professional practice – and the signs of active encouragement from the West are everywhere in evidence, the attitude is somewhat harder on the side of social functionality, for when it took on African literature tended to go with Ngara who holds that 'the African critic cannot see himself in isolation from the African politician, philosopher, theologian, or educator, all of whom are looking for African solutions to their problems' (6). This African approach not only hardened over time, but also appears to have been increasingly in favour of breaking away from the business of the academy as such in everything but in name, concerned solely with the 'question which, with the immense field of life and of literature lying before him, the critic has to answer; for himself first, and afterwards for others' (Arnold 14). Currently, there are but few Nigerian universities with a 'Department of English', as in the old days. Some are departments of Literature and English, some of English and Literary Studies.

Academic disciplines are usually identified by the body of knowledge they cultivate, like physics, 'an organized body of knowledge about nature' (Northrop Frye 11). For this reason, he objects to calling the discipline concerned with the organizing of a body of knowledge about literature by the name of 'literature', and argues rather that 'Art, like nature, has to be distinguished from the systematic study of it, which is criticism' (11). He does highlight a point here that tends to be forgotten, or perhaps to be avoided, by Nigerian and African academics working in the field, namely that literature is art, that the semantic content of the notion 'literature' is this specific hyperonym *art* (see Sandor Hervey). It is an object that can be studied systematically; and this systematic study, whether the art be music, painting, sculpture, or literature is what is called *criticism.*

The 'systematic study may, of course, be distinguished from the 'organized body of knowledge' and 'the intelligent standards of criticism' by means of which the systematic study is carried out. 'Criticism', therefore, has tended to be thought of in terms of an operation, corresponding to the systematic study. The organized body of knowledge corresponds to what the Formalists called literary science.

Frye's use of physics is not entirely fortuitous, for it shares with poetics, as with mathematics, the end morpheme -ics derived from the Greek -ikē that marks an organized intellectual activity. Accordingly, his understanding of

criticism as the organized body of knowledge about art rests in classicism, and specifically in Aristotle's *Poetics (Peri poietikē),* sidestepping the humanism which had sought to lower the bar from the level of intellectual culture to the everyday in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Some scholars think that literature is too important a matter to be left to the experts, but we still leave surgery to the experts, although having or not having it might make the difference between life and death. There is no doubt that people make use of literature however they think they can, whether to search for a motto for life, for titbits for self-nourishment as Arnold suggests, or a means for justifying violence, or exclusion, or racial supremacy, or whatever. But the reason why it is assigned an academic discipline and housed as one among others of a similar kind in a university is not for the study of these uses that can both go to infinity and conflict among themselves and violate reason itself. The extent of possibilities is beyond what any rule or a combination of rules can account for. It is with the rules that explain the object itself, the work of art, that the discipline is concerned, and the investigation of this object to understand it. This is what we see in Aristotle's *Poetics,* for example. The everyday interest is referenced approvingly in Eagleton, while the academic cultivating of verifiable knowledge is rather scorned. For the vast majority of readers of literary productions, their possible uses are expectedly the focus of interest. The academic readers must be the minority – and that is a good thing, just as pharmaceutical knowhow pertains to a few compared to the users of the products. But whereas the tastes of the public change, often as new attractions are supplied, the academic professionals usually continue to revisit the literary productions judged to be art, and take interest in the new attractions in search of literary objects that demand sustained study. This activity is what Heidegger calls *preserving* of art works, and it is a vital cultural function, especially for 'their own native sphere' (*Poetry, Language, Thought* 39). But it is not the attitude of the collector that is meant:

> The more solitarily the work, fixed in the figure, stands on its own and the more cleanly it seems to cut all ties to human beings, the more simply does the thrust come into the Open that such a work *is,* and the more essentially is the extraordinary thrust to the surface and the long-familiar thrust down. But this multiple thrusting is nothing violent, for the more purely the work is itself transported into the openness of beings—an openness opened by itself—the more simply does it transport us into this openness and thus at the same time transport us out of the realm of the ordinary. To submit to this displacement means: to transform our accustomed ties to world and to earth and henceforth to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay within the truth that is happening in the work. Only the restraint of this staying lets what is created be the work that it is. This letting the work be a work we call the preserving of the work. It is only for such preserving that the work yields itself in its createdness as actual, i.e., now: present in the manner of a work (64).

Roland Barthes notion of 'the death of the author' is in fact an old idea in

the philosophical tradition going back at least to Hegel. It is encountered here in Heidegger's remark that 'the more solitarily the work, fixed in the figure, stands on its own and the more cleanly it seems to cut all ties to human beings', the more manifestly clear that there *is* a work of art. The author-names commonly displayed on covers and title pages of modern literary works are often treated by readers as keys for use in accessing the work – we note, of course, that the formulation 'accessing the work' puts on its head the real dynamic of the reading event as Heidegger describes it above, namely that it is 'to transform our accustomed ties to world and to earth and henceforth to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay within the truth that is happening in the work'. Reading 'transport[s] us out of the realm of the ordinary', or as Robert Jauss puts it, 'negates the real interests of [the reader's] everyday world', thereby he/she 'attains an "aesthetic attitude"'.

But granted that the vast majority of literary artworks come along with their authors' names, still there are some like *Beowulf, The Dream of the Rood,* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* – as there are indeed oral poems and folktales whose authorships are unknown, and yet perfectly readable. Academic study of a work of art, that is, devoted reading, is to this end: letting 'the work yield[] itself in its createdness as actual'. The literary work of art is first and foremost a totality: it *is*. In Aristotle's *Poetics,* it is shown to comprise a certain number of components which are held together in organic unity, so that *it is,* means that it is one object, one action, whole and complete. To properly see it, as Heidegger brings out above, one must proceed without presuppositions: the work discloses itself in the openness of beings, and the reader has the role of an observer – we may say, therefore, a phenomenological reader, for it is only such that has no vested interest in trying to appropriate the work on behalf of one personal or group project or another, but will let it yield itself 'in its createdness as actual'. In disclosing itself, it simultaneously discloses a world in which time is the time of the work, and so also space. Thus, the work brings the reader into its own world – instead of the other way around – its world where nothing is mediated, but speaking is taking place, and action as well. Only its preservers may have the commitment 'to stay within the truth that is happening in the work'. The devoted reading that can lead to this is not what can be expected of everyday readers who are searching for something in the work, sometimes just entertainment or diversion, a message or some 'consumable'.

Northrop Frye calls the academic discipline we are concerned with *criticism,* which puts the accent on an event, *judging, deciding* by explicit methods that the critic has before him or her an art object. And the tools at the critic's disposition for this task he calls 'an organized and systematic body of knowledge', a *science,* which echoes the formalist notion of a 'literary science'.

Criticism, like art, is a word not greatly favoured in the writings of Nigerian professionals in the field, but it needs to be stressed that it is at the centre of the profession's engagement – and not in Eagleton's sense of 'public relations', although this is quite an interesting word, and seems to capture an attitude and a mood relevant to what is being done in the name of literary scholarship. In fact, it frequently occurs in PhD theses and sometimes in journal articles that the scholar's aim is to 'raise awareness' about a specific social or political problem, and then as part of the Conclusion, recommendations on the ways in which the political authorities should respond and deal with specific identified social problems. But the conception of 'literature' or 'literary studies' is rarely as the name of a discipline, the same way that 'English' stands as the name of an academic engagement in which one studies how English works, what things are called in English, the English sound system, the rules for combining these names to create sentences, how these sentences may be interpreted, and so forth. The other half of the programme, the literary, is either speculating about history or culture, political or social/sociological issues, or ethics and public morality, areas in which he is no more knowledgeable than the next man.

Literary Scholarship

The study of literature is associated with a whole raft of subjects including artist personalities (like *Chinua Achebe* by C. L. Innes), the sources of inspiration and influences on the artists; their target audiences, style and stylistics; the life preoccupations and engagements of the artists (Like David Carroll, *Chinua Achebe: Novelist, Poet, Critic)*, the environments where they grew up (works like *Chinua Achebe's World* by Robert Wren), or a singular achievement (like Chinwe Okechukwu's *Achebe the Orator).* These can involve deep research and generate genuine knowledge to be cultivated in a department of literary studies. They may play some role in the central task of the discipline, which is criticism, but not a substitute for it. Ransom makes an interesting list of what he says are 'not criticism' ; namely Personal registrations, which are 'declarations of the effect of the art-work upon the critic as reader'; Synopsis and paraphrase; historical studies, which 'include studies of the general literary background; author's biography, of course with special reference to autobiographical evidences in the work itself; bibliographical items; the citation of literary originals and analogues, and therefore what, in general, is called comparative literature'; linguistic studies; moral studies; and 'any other special studies which deal with some abstract or prose content taken out of the work. Nearly all departments of knowledge may conceivably find their own materials in literature, and take them out' (235-236). The study of ideas and issues of interest in a book, for instance, can be engaging. But these are not of interest to the discipline as such, as they can also

be found in newspaper stories, television episodes and serials, films, home videos, political speeches, sermons, and a vast range of media. What may make them of interest to a critic is that they are involved in the making of an art work – and for that reason cease to be worth discussing for their own sake.

Today in Nigerian literary scholarship, there are new historicists, post-colonial advocacy, and advocacies of many different sorts, without any evidence or a clear demonstration that the work presented as the primary text in the study is a work of art. This demonstration about the art-nature of the object of study belongs properly to criticism. Increasingly, stories of the kind where the issues of the moment in the sociopolitical world are preferred by the commentators writing for literary journals, which in turn lead to more of the same sort of stories being produced. Vibrant criticism, with the capacity to identify and analyse literary works precisely as literary works of art naturally produces the opposite effect, that is works that task the critical mind, works that do not fade away and become dated over time like in the fashion industry. Indeed, works of the kind can sometimes be 'difficult of access, folded back upon the enigma of its own origin and existing wholly in reference to the pure act of writing', as Foucault phrases it (327), but in the current mood of literal mindedness may just be put down as an example of how not to write a novel or a poem.

What some have called 'the age of theory' was the search for 'the critical idiom' as John Drakakis phrases it, that would be adequate for characterizing literary art as such, but there were also internal pressures coming from the art world itself; for example, the explosion in novel production to the effect that the other forms were beginning to look like distant and unrelated things, as if it needed a theory specific and adequate to it. Commonly these focused on the historical junctures that were appropriate for their formation, as in Lukács's *Theory of the Historical Novel, w*here writing is premised on:

> a homogeneous world, [such that] even the separation between man and world, between 'I' and 'you', cannot disturb its homogeneity. Like every other component of this rhythm, the soul stands in the midst of the world; the frontier that makes up its contours is not different in essence from the contours of things: it draws sharp, sure lines, but it separates only relatively, only in relation to and for the purpose of a homogeneous system of adequate balances (32-33).

Other theories focused on the materials out of which novels were made, the apparent logic of their construction and cohesion, preoccupations, and their provenance. On provenance, for example, a French novel, an English novel, and in our own time an African novel were presupposed to have specific features deriving from their place of origin, while a Victorian novel or an eighteenth century novel was presumed to carry the imprint of the age which was part and parcel of its character.

This pattern of thinking resulted in proliferation of classificatory concepts:

war novels, novels of apartheid, dramas of interpersonal conflict, traditional festive drama, the bourgeois novel, political novels, aristocratic drama, middle class aesthetics, and so forth, as well as proliferation of approaches to literature, particularly, the novel, and a loose understanding of the concept of theory. According to Judith Ryan, for instance:

> Throughout most of the period following World War II, 'literary theory' referred to the systematic study of literature, including both its nature and its function. It involved categorizing intrinsic features such as style, imagery, narrative modes, genre, and the like. Some studies of literary theory also paid attention to extrinsic aspects of literature, such as its relation to various contexts, and to different angles of approach that could be taken to understand literary texts (1-2).

Using theory 'as a blanket category' (2), reduces its value as a term, and with everything in one basket, it is hard to know the relative standing of one to the others. However, it seems awkward that for one and the same object – if indeed we are dealing with the same object, there should be so many theories. And so, there is a possibility that some of those amount to what Ransom had called diversions. Ryan notes that 'many of these theories emerged from history and the social sciences rather than the humanities'. Lowry Pei was to draw the consequence that something was likely to be lost in all this; for there were forays into:

> psychology, theology, political theory, philosophy, linguistics … [it is] not difficult to extend the list. We have Marxist criticism, Freudian criticism, structuralist criticism – once upon a time there were historical criticism and biographical criticism – more schools than I need name exist and are coming into being; but in each case the adjective that precedes 'criticism' is more important than any text. Marxist or Freudian or anthropological or feminist or Christian thought, the critic takes for granted, is more important than the single work of art. But I want to ask. What happens if we try to focus on literature itself? (41-42)

What gets lost is the work of art and the discourse appropriate to it, namely criticism, while the critic is concentrating 'an amateur way of engaging another discipline' (Pei 41). Whether it is psychoanalysis or history, or linguistics, and so forth, there are experts who have the knowhow, the tools of research, and the appropriate material to study and account for the specific phenomenon in question. The same ought to apply to the literary scholar. There is a proper object, a literary work of art, or as Aristotle calls it, a *poem,* and there ought to be a certain expertise and knowhow required to deal with it. This object is not less important than the object of a historian or a linguist. As a matter of fact, as the German philosopher Martin Heidegger sees it, the literary object comes before all other human productions:

> Poetry is the foundation which supports history, and therefore it is not a mere appearance of culture, and absolutely not the mere 'expression' of a 'culture-

> soul'…. [It] is the inaugural naming of being and of the essence of all things—not just any speech, but that particular kind which for the first time brings into the open all that which we then discuss and deal with in everyday language. Hence poetry never takes language as a raw material ready to hand, rather it is poetry which first makes language possible…. [The] primitive language … in which being is established (*Existence and Being* 306-307).

German philosophers going back at least to Hegel continue to give accounts of poetry which should give critics pause. Of course, Hegel has been called 'the greatest irrationalist in the history of philosophy' (Lukács 18). The difference is that Heidegger is proceeding in a phenomenological way. In the above, for instance, he brings out what is absolutely clear, that poetry *manifests* language, by virtue of which it makes all the various productions of language possible. And so, 'the essence of language must be understood through the essence of poetry' (307).

The way, however, in which poetry manifests language is by creating art, by weaving words into a work of art, whose organic vitality becomes manifest 'as the work sets itself back … into the naming power of words' (Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* 45). Whether the theory industry is talking about history, style, theology, Marxism, or Freudianism, the interest is to bring out what the novel – it is often the novel – is saying, and the weight of the demonstration is the showing that this is what the novel is actually saying, and there is no adverting to the fact that being a work of art has something to do with the expressiveness of the novel; for instance that two readers can hear the work differently, without either being necessarily in error.

The Nature of Art

The New Critics were but one school in the age of theory. The other main one was neo-Aristotelianism. They emphasized different aspects of the literary, the New Criticism focusing on 'ambiguity, irony, paradox and "tension" in literary works, the semantic definition proposed that literary discourse was distinctive for possessing a high degree of "implicit meaning" or "semantic density"' (Lamarque 329), but with an 'insistence on the text as an ultimately self-sufficient artefact' (Emig 188), while the neo-Aristotelians sought 'an instrument adapted to dealing with poetry as such' (Abrams 26), emphasized the concepts of plot, character, theme in their critical analyses and built systems out of these. The New Criticism movement was to run out of steam in the late 1950s. Neo-Aristotelianism lasted longer, and according to Habermas in a paper of 1980, it 'enjoys a certain success today' (1758). A clear aspect of the long-term impact is the introduction of 'literary theory' in the programmes of many departments of English, literature, and literary studies. Another long-term impact is the application of theory loosely to any generalization about literature based on what is necessarily a limited corpus. Whereas physical

sciences can proceed by way of such inferences, inference from even one literary work, if it is one indeed, may occur only by strict selection from the text, and consigning everything else to silence. Inference has to be backed by open and transparent assessment for the 'plausibility argument' to apply. A more important problem is that 'theories' based on what texts register or enunciate can only speak for a very small number of texts, as the possibilities of enunciation and registration are infinite. Accordingly, post-colonial hybridity, Marxist class struggle, historicism/new historicism monitoring registration of contemporary historical realities and place names, and so forth are taught as literary theories insofar as the features and trends may be made out in some literary works.

However, a literary theory in the strict sense has in view the entirety of the literary field, irrespective of provenance or form, genre or historical epoch. Such is the general statement that lies at the heart of *Poetics.* The course on literary theory should similarly be organized around a theory or theories that offer an account of the entire phenomenon of literary, and closely follow the evolution of literary history for updates and significant departures.

The nature of art is the central problem of literary theory. It is a kind of statement from which 'the form or matrix for descriptive statements can be derived' (Mulder 10). When we speak of literary studies, the work of the first order of importance is Aristotle's *Poetics* of which the opening chapter yields as a distillate about poetry that we are dealing with *mimesis by means of language alone.* All the major statements of the *Poetics,* and the minor ones as well derive from this notion. Some of the major ones are that poetic art is of one of three forms, lyric, drama, and narrative and the modes are either tragic or comic; the poem to is composed, and in terms of organic structure has a muthos, character, words, and thought, and may have melody and spectacle as well. The major constituent parts – the organic elements – can be shown to give rise to further subdivisions. This breakdown and the following of the strands in their full implications is the core of literary studies, the essential knowledge cultivated and transmitted by the discipline.

Also essential for literary studies is reflection on the nature of the work of art, with special reference to literary art. The relevant philosophical principle is *agree sequitur esse* – literally, 'action follows being', namely 'the action posited gives information about the nature of the being behind the action'. In much of what has been called literary theory, the poem is taken as a discourse event or even as straightforward communication, and the presupposition is that the necessary discourse elements are in place. Thus the literary work is read in a transactional manner:

> Language *re-produces* reality. This is to be understood in the most literal way: reality is produced anew by means of language. The speaker recreates the event and his experience of the event by his discourse. The hearer grasps the discourse first, and through this discourse, the event which is being reproduced. Thus the

situation inherent in the practice of language, namely that of exchange and dialogue, confers a double function on the act of discourse; for the speaker it represents reality, for the hearer it recreates that reality (Benveniste 22).

For some, reading is a pure process of reception, 'characterized as pragmatic and aims to act upon the hearer to indicate a behavior to him' (237). The task of 'indicating a behaviour' to members of the public from 'the immense field of life and of literature' is assigned by Emmanuel Obiechina to 'the committed writer, as well as the other intellectuals of society, [who] has the duty of explaining his predicament to the individual and, what is more, of helping him to evolve new values which will accommodate the shock of change' (34). Quite apart from the question as to how such reorientation of the masses may be achieved since the scholars' researches are discussed in conferences and published in journals which are read by people of the profession, the notion *literary worth* must be seen as far from straightforward. Might it not conceivably strike some as the novel with the most readily discoverable and appropriable lessons, while others are thinking of critically engaging ones?

As has been mentioned, literary products are in the public domain; for 'written discourse creates an audience which extends in principle to anyone who can read' (Ricoeur 101), and in handling it, readers exercise their capacities. But it must also be observed that the kinds of things the reading public takes delight in tends to encourage more of the same from the writing community, while writers like Wole Soyinka who work, so to say, with the back to the reading public have to write as prompted by the Muse, not by demand from the public. Such a writer has to have strong inner motivation to work in the given an environment. However, while it is not up to the scholar to tell the public what to read, it is certainly up to him or her to say what deserves critical attention, what may be recommended to other scholars, and what may be demanded as mandatory reading for students. It is up to him or her also to say why this is important, and why they deserve a place, a permanent place in the archive of the literary tradition.

Conclusion

Art is a major part of the embodiment of culture, and in everyday language covers everything that involves skill, ingenuity, imagination, and so forth. So, to some ears, calling literature art may not sound like saying something particularly noteworthy. However, art and aesthetics theories make a distinction between what Hegel calls the complete arts and the incomplete or ancillary arts. In his own words:

> It is of course the case that art can be used as a fleeting play, affording recreation and entertainment, decorating our surroundings, giving pleasantness to the externals of our life, and making other objects stand out by artistic adornment.

Thus regarded, art is indeed not independent, not free, but ancillary (7).

Literature as a complete and independent art is what Heidegger is talking about where he says 'The more solitarily the work, fixed in the figure, stands on its own and the more cleanly it seems to cut all ties to human beings, the more simply does the thrust come into the Open that such a work *is'*. The complete arts are marked by *self-contained and self-subsisting existence*. It is therefore a very important question how these self-subsisting human creations work internally, for they are not only a stable element within culture, but as Heidegger says, they are 'the foundation which supports history'. Knowledge about this object is the core of literary scholarship/literary studies; from it the approaches to literature, which some treat as *theories* of literature, may draw for validity. But literary productions themselves can also be dependent arts, even parasitical, attaching to one point of view or another and deriving sustenance therefrom. There are novels, for instance, that are pure propaganda on behalf of one social discourse or another. There are some that may strike members of one group as propaganda, but not others. It is by means of literary theory, not an approach to literature as such that a principled demonstration can be given as regards the character of a given work. As propaganda, a literary product may contain the features that a Marxist, a psychoanalytic, an ecocritical, or a postcolonial critic is after, and give rise to a vibrant discussion. But it will still be an example of what Ransom calls a diversion, as the discussion does not provide a guide as to whether the work the discussion is based on is worth preserving – for its own sake; for the sake of culture; for the sake of humanity – as an instance of what the human spirit is capable of. It must also be mentioned that the homage to the human spirit is being denied when a great literary production like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart,* instead of *'mimesis* [as] *poiesis*, that is, construction, creation' (Ricoeur 141), is read as a *representation* of what obtained in a certain place and time, which the author personally witnessed or had received through someone else. Background and influence studies, as well as engaged and protest analysis can also tend in that direction.

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Talent Management and Organizational Performance in Pharmaceutical Companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria

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Abstract

This work examined the effect of talent management and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The study reviewed relevant conceptual, theoretical and empirical literature. This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory. Talent retention, training and development, and talent attraction were employed as the explanatory variables while organizational performance is the dependent variable. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study comprises the staff of the pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria – 1824. Sample size of 332 respondents was selected for the study using Borg and Gall (1973) formula. Questionnaire was employed as the main instrument of data collection. The data generated were analyzed using frequency, percentage analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The study found that talent retention has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. Training and development has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance and talent attraction has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. The study concludes that talent management has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. The study therefore recommends that management should make retention a priority since an organization's strength and future success are not only dependent on its financial resources but ultimately depends on effective talent management. Management should not only focus on attracting talented individuals but should do more to retain the most talented among them as it would enhance the growth and sustainability of pharmaceutical companies.

Keywords: talent retention, training and development, talent attraction, organizational performance

INTRODUCTION

Talent management has almost become an inevitable management function in modern times. Due to tough competition in every sphere of business today, organizations are vying for the best people from the job market. Attracting the best talent from the job market is not everyone's cup of tea. It requires a lot of

competence, expertise and experience on the part of the organization to recruit the best in the industry. Human capital has vital intellectual, economic, and social dimensions, and this is why organizations are paying serious and comprehensive attention to the management of their human resources, developing appropriate strategies aimed at deriving maximum benefits from their human capital investment. This will also help organizations to successfully manage their competitive strategies (Almutairi1 & Alsawalhah, 2020). A major part of the human resource department is devoted to talent management, which is mostly dedicated to the purpose of recognizing, sourcing and poaching best talent.

Talent management can be defined as a deliberate approach implemented to recruit or hire, develop and retain people with required aptitude or skills to meet the present and future goals or needs of the organization. It is the creation and maintenance of a supportive and pro-people organizational culture. Talent management is, therefore, the commitment of an organization to recruit, develop, retain the most talented and qualitative employees available in the job market. Talent management starts with identification of the appropriate skilled people required for the organization and then a proper selection of people with requisite potentials and skills in desired job. After identification and selection of the right kind of people, talent management implements competitive compensation that may include attractive pay-package, periodical increment, health insurance, and paid leaves, etc. for the employees. The selected workforce is provided with training and regular refreshment programs so as to match the emerging requirements of the organization.

In a study, Bersin (2016) asserts that growth potential of organizations worldwide depends on the ability of organizations to have the right people, in the right place at the right time. Employers are forced to compete to attract and retain an increasing pool of talented individuals in order to achieve their objectives. Companies with effective talent management practices deliver better results for shareholders (Huselid, 2015). Effective talent management practices can create enduring competitive advantage and enhance organizational productivity. Srihandayani and Kusnendi (2018) conducted effect of Talent Management and Organizational Culture on the Performance of Employees (Study on Employee Brantas Abipraya Company, Jakarta). These studies revealed that talent management and organizational culture have significant effect on employee performance. Due to scarcity of talent, organizations around the world are competing for the same pool of talents to acquire and retain talents in order to maintain their operations and continue to grow in terms of service and profitability. Most assets of an organization such as, products, technologies and strategies may be replicated easily but human capital takes great deal of time to develop and considered as a key asset to

manage and adapt to the organizational needs (Guthridge, McPherson, & Wolf, 2019).

In a globalized era, managing and developing talent has become a crucial factor in the success of an organization. Talent Management is not limited to acquiring the right candidate but, beyond that, it extends to identifying the untapped and unusual qualities of your employees to develop and retain them to get the desired results. Talent Management is defined as 'the systematic attraction, identification, training and development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organization'. Talent Management has gained more ground and relevance due to the evolution of corporate human resource and training in today's present work environment. The concept of talent management originated in 1990 when the responsibilities of human resources departments shifted from being mainly routine administration processing to more complex configuration and machine-based planning duties. Decision makers exclusively relied on HR department for employee management and training in the competent evaluation of modern industry and business sectors. Again, HR plays vital role in developing good compensation packages which include: employees' fringe benefits, stock options and bonuses, and serving as a central point of communication for employee health and happiness (Bersin, 2016). Studying the impact of talent management on organizational performance is based on the assumption that talent management improves organizational performance by attracting and retaining the talented people it needs (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). The goal is to create a positive and comfortable environment for employees, strive to get employees who are satisfied and then engaging them. It is against this background that this study examines the effect of talent management and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problems

Today, most organizations are struggling to have a clear understanding of the definition and characteristics of talent management and its enabling technologies. Even though they know how to administratively recruit, retain and replace, they are still struggling with the strategic elements of managing talent. However, despite the high cost of developing the pharmaceutical workforce, talented employees in the focused firms appear to be changing jobs into other fields of endeavour. Some pharmaceutical companies in the Niger Delta attract and hire top talents, train and develop vibrant and sustainable pool of intellectual capabilities yet face the challenge of replacing experienced and talented employees. This is probably because they play down on attracting, training, development and retaining workers. They probably lose some key intellectuals to competitors who offer similar services/products while some opt

out to start their own private businesses on a smaller scale. Issues such as grievances, absenteeism, low morale, voluntary resignation, negative attitude to work, pilfering, and high turnover rates of top talents abound. The determinants of talent management in this study include: talent retention, employee training and development and talent attraction The problems of this study focused on the effects of talent retention, employee training and development and talent attraction, as independent variables and organizational performance as dependent variables with special reference on organizational performance. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the effect of talent management and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective was to examine the effect of talent management and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine the influence of employee retention and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

2. Assess the influence of training and development and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

3. Ascertain the effect of talent attraction and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following were formulated to give this study direction.

1. To what extent does talent retention influence organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria?

2. To what extent does employee training and development influence organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria?

3. To what extent does talent attraction affect organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to give direction to this study.

Ho[1]: Talent retention has no positive significant relationship with organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta,

Nigeria.

Ho[2]: Training and development has no positive significant relationship with organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Ho[3]: Talent attraction has no positive significant relationship with organizational pharmaceutical in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Framework

Talent Management

The word talent means a factor that differentiates the performance of every employee in an organization or company. If a company wants to increase profits in its current line of business and continue to grow and develop its existing company, the company must focus on finding, attracting, and retaining the best employees. A good company is a company whose vision, mission and company values that have been previously set are carried out by a number of talented employees who work together and synergize (Pella & Afifah, 2017: 70). Employee talent must be managed by the company properly with a good management system. A talent management system that is implemented in an integrated manner and in line with other management functions will provide a real increase in business performance and employee performance. A successful company is one that creates a well-developed talent culture. Employee talent development culture consists of programs that specifically consist of company strategies in selecting the right employees, placing employees according to their abilities and skills, providing training and employee development that can improve performance at work and retain employees by providing compensation (Pella & Afifah, 2017: 75). According to Pamela et al. (2017), results proved that talent management initiatives at Lebanese Banks impacted on the leadership quality, business unit productivity and teamwork in the organization.

Eglal Hafez et al. (2017) found that the components of talent management (motivating outstanding performance, training and development, job enrichment) have a significant impact on job satisfaction and on employee retention. Deepika and Sampurna (2018) conclude that a synchronization of talent management practices and employee engagement initiatives leads to improved talent retention and proposes a model to this end. Erkut et al. (2018) found that effective talent management practices have important influences on human resources, which is the most critical element in a company's survival.

Hitu and Satyawan (2018) indicate that talent management practices have direct impact on employee motivation, employee creativity, employee satisfaction and employee competency. Results from Nadine and Abubakr (2019) empirical research uncover that talent management and employee recognition can significantly affect the level of employee performance as well as contributing to organizational success and positioning. This study also found that talent management and employee recognition are interrelated variables that affect employee performance. Syed et al. (2019) results indicated that talent management strategies significantly and positively affect employees' performance behavior; whereas talent management outputs partially mediate the relationship between talent management strategies and employees' performance behavior. Outcomes of Munaza (2019) study revealed a significantly positive effect of talent management practices i.e. recruitment and selection for talent attraction, coaching and mentoring for learning and development of talent, compensation for retention of talent on employee performance. Amina and Parbudyal (2020) found that, based on theoretical framework in the context of both inclusive and exclusive talent management, perceived equity is a valuable resource that motivates employees and results in favourable outcomes. Moza et al. (2020) concludes that the three independent variables to talent management practices, i.e recruitment, selection and learning & development, strongly impact organizational performance in Islamic banks in Kenya; but not for employee retention which has no impact on organizational performance. Wickramaaratch and Perera (2020) study revealed that talent management has a significant positive impact over employee performance and job satisfaction and also proposed that adopting talent management is worthwhile as it leads to attracting and retaining a satisfied young generation and improved performance at work.

Results of the study by Riham and Tarik (2020) show that talent attraction and talent retention have no impact on sustainable organizational performance whereas learning and development and career management were found to have significantly positive impacts. Hayfaa (2021) study indicated relative consensus in talent philosophies across organizations in four industries; talent was largely perceived as exclusive, despite disagreements on whether it was stable or developable. Differences were identified in terms of how talent management was understood in organizations and also how it was executed in practice in terms of talent identification and recruitment, training and development, performance assessment and talent retention. Oluwatobi and Gabriel (2021) concluded that talent management practices had an effect on job performance of librarians in university libraries in the South-West of Nigeria.

Organizational performance

Organizational performance is a way of measuring the efficiency and

effectiveness of organization's action which has to do with the assessment of advancement made towards the attainment of the set objectives. In business it is recognized as a central outcome variable of interest, ranging from human resources and marketing to operations management. Organizational performance encompasses the actual outputs or results realized by an organization, measured against the intended outputs, mainly considered as objectives and goals or the previous period performance (Hailey, 2006). Views posited by Richard *et al.* (2009) depict organizational performance as comprising of three specific parts of organization outcomes that include product market performance, financial performance and shareholder return. Organizational performance is also defined as a set of financial and non-financial indicators that offer information on the degree of attainment of the organization's objectives (Jaleha & Machuki, 2018). Most organizations measure their performance based on the effectiveness of achieving company goals, while another significant majority views it in terms of efficiency in deploying resources (MacPherson & Pabari, 2004; Derda & Dea Flores, 2017). High organizational performance is realized when all fragments of an organization work in unison to attain great results, which are measured based on the value delivered to customers. Some of these parts include the resources, structure, leadership, human resources, business process, and strategy among others (Jaleha & Machuki, 2018; Handika &Wibowo, 2018). Productivity, employee turnover, profitability and market share are some of the determinants of an organization's performance (Glunk & Heijltjes, 2009).

Talent Retention and Organizational performance

The notable objective of talent management is not only hiring talent but also ensuring their retention in the organization. Factors upon which the retention rate depends are attractive pay package, job specification, safety and security of the employees, personal development of an employee, recognition and culture of the organization, and the fit between the job and talent. The importance also comes from the definition where talent management is defined as a systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those individuals who possess a high potential that creates a particular value to an organization (Krishnan and Scullion, 2017). A strong retention strategy becomes a powerful recruitment tool. Retention of key employees is therefore important to the sustainability and survival of any organization either with short or long benefits (Salau, 2022). It is a known fact that retaining your best employees ensures customer satisfaction, increased product sales, satisfied colleagues and reporting staff, effective succession planning and deeply embedded organizational knowledge and learning.

The term employee retention is said to be the ability of an organization to retain its employees within the organization in the long run. It can be measured

in simple statistics like percentage and considered as the outcome of efforts made by the employer to keep employees within the organization; in this sense, it is considered to be the strategy. It is therefore advisable that every organization should maintain its best performers especially in today's competitive economic arena where competitors are known to poach employees from each other (Farley, 2015). As organizations continue to pursue high productivity and improved results through talent management, they are taking a holistic approach to talent management. Agrela (2018) emphasized the need to focus on the factors that affect employee retention leading to growth and success of organizations as these employees' productivity improves due to gaining experience as they have worked for a long time in the organization and are conversant with the organizational culture and processes.

Training and Development and Organizational Performance

Aswathappa (2018) attempts to draw a distinction among training, education, and development and argues that training is the process of imparting specific skills while education on the other hand is confined to theoretical learning in the classroom. He further defines development as the learning opportunities designed to help employees grow. To ensure a zero-talent outage and to further ensure a planned succession as against a replacement from outside, many organizations now engage in talent development activities that can enhance their organizational reputation as talent hunters (Salau, 2022). Staff development and training activities are designed to help an organization meet its skills requirement and to help its employees realize their maximum potential with the overall aim of implementing its strategy and ensuring the success of the organization (Ashton & Morton, 2015). Talent development can go through several stages, such as developing subordinates, managers, and certification. Each organization in the world has its own talent development policy (Cheloha and Swain, 2005), because there are no common standards which should be applied in all organizations (Lehmann, 2009). One of the main purposes of talent management is to classify employees in categories according to their skills (Thomas, 2009), to determine who are highly qualified and who are the poor performers (Hills, 2009). Upon identifying poor performers, the talent management process must be able to take actions to specify whether the employee is unskilled, which will urge the need to train him (McDonnel et al. 2017), or that poor performers will be identified and then moved to other positions where they would show their inner skills (Blass, 2007). Training is a learning process that involves the acquisition of skills, concepts, rules, or attitudes to increase organizational performance (Blass, 2017). Aswathappa (2018) continues to argue that the organization must offer a wide range of development provision, enabling staff to gain the skills, competences, and experience necessary to contribute to the attainment of individual, team and

organizational goals and expectations.

Talent Attraction and Organizational performance

Attracting the right talent has become a great challenge for businesses today. According to Storey et al. (2010), both public and business sector organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and keep talented workers, especially younger, highly skilled staff. This is supported by a survey, which was conducted by Deloitte, which found that the ability to attract and retain talent is one of the most critical issues of people management that face organizations today (Lyria, 2014). The attraction of the workforce is an important part of the organization's performance, and it usually starts by launching a job, and ends with new employment. Talent attraction has become a great challenge for modern organizations. The components of talent attraction are recruitment and selection, employer branding, employee values proposition and employer of choice (Armstrong & Taylor, 2016).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Capital Theory (Becker 1964)

This theory postulates that human capital – the composition of employee skills, knowledge, and abilities – is a central driver of organizational performance. Hills (2009) asserts that human capital is the time, experience, knowledge and abilities of an individual household or a generation, which can be used in the production process. This theory contends that peoples learning capacities are comparable to other natural resources, when effectively exploited the results are profitable to the organization. Therefore, the human capital theory helped to examine how talent management could enhance recruitment processes that are essential to employee performance. The relevance of this theory to talent management is that human capital consists of various components, skills, time, experience and knowledge which are talent embedded in individual employees. Joyce et al. (2007) defines talent as the core competencies and skills embedded in people and are the points of advantage for employee performance. Human Capital theory explains the collective capability, knowledge and skills of the people that are employed by an organization and therefore will be useful in examining how talent is acquired with regards to skills and knowledge and how capability is developed through training and development and its influences on employee performance.

Empirical Review

Talent management has been studied by various authors but in different aspects and directions. Mahmoud (2019) examined the influence of talent management on performance of employee in public sector institutions of the UAE. The

study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 200 public sector employees in UAE. This study adopted a stratified sampling technique to select a sample size of 156 respondents. The questionnaire consisted of open and closed questions, depending on the objectives of the research. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The initial portion of the questionnaire included queries about common information related to participants' relationship with the firm. The 2nd part dealt with talent management strategies and aspects of employee performance. The survey is well thought out and structured on a 5-point Likert scale structured questionnaire. Hypothesis was tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. Data was analyzed both for descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (correlation analysis). Data was presented using tables and figures. The findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between talent acquisition strategy and employee's performance. The findings also showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between talent development and employee performance. The findings revealed also a statistically significant relationship between retention and employee performance and finally the study revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between talent management and employee performance. This study concluded that component of talent management had positive influence on performance of public sector employees in UAE. The study recommends that there should be healthy and stress free working environment, career progression opportunity, regular training, tolerance of employees' innovative ideas and transparent and proper promotion policy for the management of talent in the organization.

Masri and Suliman (2019) assessed the relationship between talent management, employee recognition and performance in research institutions. A survey questionnaire was used to collect the primary data of the study on talent management (TM) and employee recognition (ER) on employee performance (EP). The questionnaire was circulated to 180 employees from various positions, educational backgrounds working at the selected research institution in Qatar on a 5-point Likert scale structured questionnaire. Hypothesis was tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient and linear regression analysis was used to analyze the data collected. The findings revealed a positive relationship between talent management and employee performance. The study concluded that a strong positive statistically significant relationship exists between talent management and employee performance. The authors advocated that the management should work on creating an ethical work environment by promoting a culture of trust and fairness through an ongoing, open discussion between colleagues and managers in order to reduce work distress and increase the employee engagement that can enhance overall employee performance.

Laksono and Mrihrahayu (2021) conducted the impact of employee engagement on talent management and knowledge management on employee performance in the social security administration for employment at the main branch office in Surakarta. In this study, out of 200 employees of the Social Security Administering Body Employment (BPJS) Surakarta, which consists of KLOK Karanganyar, KLOK Sragen, KLOK Wonogiri and KLOK Sukoharjo, the authors used 67 respondents who were taken from 4 KLOK plus 15 Surakarta Office employees in particular on a Likert scale structured questionnaire. Statistical tool used in the survey was path analysis. Findings revealed that the results were the same with those of Irtamieh et al. (2016), showing that talent management has a significant impact on employee performance through employee management. In conclusion, the study noted that employees should be able to better manage their talents and knowledge, either from previous experience or from seminars, training provided by the company and also employees should be able to maintain a good enough performance and be able to improve their optimal performance to contribute to organizational development, especially in BPJS Ketenagakerjaan, Surakarta Main Branch Office.

Mohana, Kathari, Rama and Kasa (2021) investigated the impact of talent management on employee job performance. Talent management is a must, irrespective of size, sector and location of the company. An attempt was made to contact the information technology companies in Chennai through emails as majority of information technology companies are located in these areas in South India. In response to this, five companies positively responded and permitted the conduct of the research. As many as 1200 questionnaires were mailed to employees in the selected companies. Out of the received filled-in questionnaires, 222 were with full information in all respects. Hence the sample size was 222 employees. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Multiple Regression were used to analyze the data collected. Hence, after complying with Reliability and Validity checks using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), estimation of overall Model fit was done using structural equation modelling. The study concludes that talent retention, leadership and rewards are impacting significantly on employee job performance of information technology companies in Chennai City.

Srihandayani and Kusnendi (2018) conducted research on the effect of talent management and organizational culture on the performance of employees (Study on Employees of Brantas Abipraya Company, Jakarta). Talent management is a complex procedure for the organization but organization needs talented employees to maximize and review their organizational performance. Talent management involves positioning the right people in the right jobs for optimal success of the organization. The aim in this study was to

investigate the relationship between talent management and organizational culture on the performance of employees of Brantas Abipraya Company, The method used was descriptive quantitative. Primary and secondary data were used for the study. Thus the data were collected through questionnaire, surveys, interviews and literature review. Data analysis techniques used was descriptive analysis and simple linear regression analysis. This study was carried out in the Brantas Abipraya Company located at Jalan DI Panjaitan Kav 14 Cawang. The target population of the study was 35 managers in the headquarters of Brantas Abipraya Company. The results showed that talent management and organizational culture had significant effect on employee performance. The authors advocated that Strong organizational culture may affect employee performance. The author advocated that a strong organizational culture can encourage the behaviour of its employees and other elements of the company to improve its performance, so as to improve company performance.

Hasmin, Jumiaty, Nasriani and Yusriadi (2023) examined talent and knowledge management on employee performance in public organizations. This research was conducted in two public health centers, namely Durikumba Health Center and Lara Health Center, in Karossa District and Central Mamuju Regency. The sampling technique used was total sampling. However, in this study, only 70 out of 74 health workers completed the questionnaire completely at the Durikumba Health Center and 45 out of 53 officers at the Lara Health Center. The total final sample obtained was 115 health workers. The model and research approach used explanatory quantitative by choosing structural equation modeling (SEM) as the basis for statistical analysis to determine the influence and relationship between variables processed using AMOS software. The study's results found that talent management can encourage knowledge management improvements and improve health workers' performance at the research sites. Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that talent management can improve knowledge management and employee performance simultaneously. So, if talent management is carried out properly, it will produce employees who perform well and, on the other hand, can improve knowledge management properly.

Faruna, H. A. (2018) examined the impact of talent management on employees' performance in ceramic firms in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Becker's 1964 human capital theory. Correlation survey research design was employed for the study. The population of the study was 1058 consisting of employees of the two ceramics firms in Kogi State and 290 were proportionately elected to consist the sample for the study. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that a significant positive relationship still exist between job satisfaction and talent retention ($r = 0.947$, p value < 0.05); also, a significant

positive relationship exists between career progression and employee commitment (r = 0.974, p-value< 0.05) and yet, a significant positive relationship still exist between training and employees competence (r = 0.963, P – value<0.05). The study concluded that talent management contributes significantly to performance of the employees in ceramic firms in Kogi State. It was recommended that organizations should provide an encouraging wages and promote employees as and at when due to make them linger on to stay with the firm; opportunities should be provided for the employees to advance in their career.

Mgbemena, Enetanya, Nsofor and Ogbogu (2022) investigated Talent Management and Organization Performance in Pharmaceutical Companies in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study reviewed relevant conceptual, theoretical and empirical literatures. This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory. Talent retention, training and talent attraction were employed as the explanatory variables while employee performance served as dependent variable. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study comprised of the staff of the selected pharmaceutical companies in Anambra State, Nigeria. 1800 sample size of 353 respondents was selected for the study using Borg and Gall (1973) formula. Questionnaire was employed as the main instrument of data collection. The data generated were analyzed using frequency, percentage analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

The study found that talent retention has a significant influence on employee productivity. Performance management systems have a significant effect on employee productivity. Training and development have a significant influence on employee productivity and talent attraction has a significant effect on employee productivity. The study concluded that talent management has a significant effect on employee productivity. The study therefore recommended that management should establish talent retention strategies and make them known to all employees. Management and employees should be involved in the entire process of performance appraisal which should be made mandatory. To enhance employee productivity, it is imperative that the organization focuses on training and developing programs that are not only essential but enhance employees' competitiveness. Programs should be designed by both managers and employees. Talent attraction such as competitive salary packages and rewards that keep employees motivated should be established as a policy in every organization.

Poonam and Mohsin (2020) examined talent management efficiency in succession planning: a proposed model for pharmaceutical companies. This article provides an insight to pharmaceutical companies about their TM strategies and its impact on their succession planning. But the suggested model has some limitations as the model is not supported by some empirical evidence.

The developed model is based on the literature review in the field and there is no empirical study done to support the model. Future research scope is there to test hypothetical model with the help of using statistical tools and techniques after collecting data. Data can be collected from the pharmaceutical companies about their practices and strategies for talent management. The study concluded that the pharmaceutical industries are struggling with talent retention issues; and without retaining the best talent succession planning cannot be designed. Continuous hiring for required leaders will not help in winning the war for talent. Succession planning and management in pharmaceutical industry needs strong TM strategies to be implemented. This model suggests the right strategies for succession planning in pharmaceutical companies with the help of literature review though, but another article can focus on empirical and statistically proven study. Such research would become a guide for pharmaceutical companies to develop their succession plans.

Oluwadurotimi and Adedeji (2019) conducted research on Talent Management and Employee Performance in Deposit Money Banks in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. The study objectives investigated the talent management practices adopted by deposit money banks in the study area and examined the effect of talent management on employee performance in deposit money banks. Descriptive statistics and appropriate inferential statistics were employed for the data analysis. The findings revealed that talent strategy is embedded in the overall strategic plan of deposit money bank with mean value of 3.65, right people with right skills are put in the right places have a mean value of 4.10 and also, talent management planning in deposit money bank is a long-term focus has a mean value of 3.81. The hypothesis testing was conducted using Pearson correlation table between talent management and employee performance. It shows that there are positive correlation values (0.618, 0.622, 0.578, 0.672, 0.715, 0.635, 0.568 and 0.608) between talent management and factors that determine employee performance in a deposit money bank. The study concluded that there is a strong relationship between talent management and employee performance in deposit money bank and thus it must be properly managed in order to improve employee's performance. The study recommended that strategies used in retaining talented employee in deposit money banks must be improved upon and must be a long-term focus of every deposit money bank in the study area.

Wandabwa and Makokha (2021) examined effect of Talent Management Practices on Employee Performance in county government of Bungoma. The study was guided by the following objective: to assess the effect of talent career management on employee performance in the county government of Bungoma. The study was anchored on Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Human Capital Theory and Job embeddedness Theory. The study adopted

descriptive research design. The target population of the study comprised management and a supervisory cadre of 136. The study used census technique since the target population was small. Data collection instrument was structured questionnaire. Pilot testing was done to test the validity and reliability of research instrument. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tabular form. Data will be subjected to correlation and Multiple Regression Statistical Methods. From the findings, the study revealed that talent career management was found to a significant positive relationship on employee performance in the county government of Bungoma. The study findings will be useful for human resource management practice, policy formulation and research works. The study findings will help counties in evaluating the importance of talent management on the performance of their employees in terms of quality of work, quantity of work cooperation with other peers, absenteeism and dependability at work.

Dim and Udu (2021) assessed talent management and employee commitment in selected pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria. Descriptive survey approach was applied, data were sourced from a five-point Likert scale structured questionnaire. The study was anchored on Becker's Human Capital Theory of 1964. Population of 1968 represented all the selected pharmaceutical companies used in the study sample of 322 employees derived using Cochran sample size recommendation. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis; findings revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between talent retention and employee commitment in the pharmaceutical companies used. Significant positive relationship exists between career advancement and employee commitment in selected pharmaceutical companies used and positive relationship also exists between talent management and employee engagement in selected pharmaceutical companies used in the study. The study concluded that talent management contributes significantly to employee commitment of pharmaceutical companies. Recommendations were made that these pharmaceutical companies should identify and build those qualities that should attract talented employees because in doing so, they will retain them. Pharmaceutical companies should employ people that are fit to develop their career so it will be of advantage to the company.

Igomu, Ozah and Ogbu (2022) examined Talent management and employee retention in Federal Medical Centre, Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. This study adopted survey design with a sample size of 400 employees of the Centre. A five-point Likert-type scale questionnaire was used to elicit responses from them. The questionnaire was mailed to the respondents electronically on Google forms using WhatsApp and email addresses but only 357 usable copies were returned and analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation

Model. Findings revealed that talent attraction has positive but insignificant effect on employee retention while talent development has positive and significant effect on employee retention at Federal Medical Centre, Keffi, Nigeria. This study recommended that Federal Medical Centre, Keffi, Nigeria should continue to develop talent of high performers for potential new roles, identify their knowledge gaps, and implement initiatives to enhance the competencies among its employees. This research contributes additional knowledge for human resource managers to identify whether there is an improvement in employee retention when implementing the right talent management practice in the organization.

Alsawalhah (2020) studied talent management strategy and its impact on employee's development: An Empirical Study on Jordanian Pharmaceutical Companies. The study was based on descriptive and analytical approaches. A questionnaire was designed for this study and was distributed to the sample of the community with a total of 280 questionnaires; 239 questionnaires, representing 85%, were returned. The study results show that there is an important role for strategic talent management in employee development in Jordanian pharmaceutical companies. The researchers recommended: developing a compensation system to encourage workers to stay in companies, supporting talented workers, involving them in important company decisions, developing specialized training programs to develop the skills and capabilities of talented workers and developing performance evaluation programs for talented workers.

Eny, Budi, Tjipto, Sudarmiatin and Farika (2021) conducted research on talent management and organizational performance: the mediating role of employee engagement. The goal of talent management is to create high performance, sustainable organizations that meet their strategic and operational goals and objectives. Interesting, selecting, engaging, developing, and retaining employees are the top five focuses of talent management. So that companies would gain a competitive advantage, the demand for human resources will continue to encourage talent management. Data were obtained from questionnaires distributed to midwives who work in private hospitals in East Java, Indonesia. Out of 200 questionnaires distributed, 172 were eligible and were distributed to employees in particular on a Likert scale structured questionnaire. The findings of the study showed an indirect relationship; the role of employee engagement as a mediator in the relationship between talent management and organizational performance shows a greater value than the direct relationship between talent management and organizational performance. The study suggested that since the midwife profession is spread throughout Indonesia, it is hoped that this type of research will further expand the reach of the respondents so that more novelties can be found in accordance with the

changes and needs of the community.

Research Design and Area of the Study

This study adopted descriptive survey research design which serves best for this type of research work while the area of study covers pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria. The population of this study consists of 1824 employees of the ten pharmaceutical companies in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The sample size comprises 356 using Borg and Gall (1973) formula. With respect to this research work, the researcher makes use of primary data. The primary sources of data include the questionnaire and the personal interview. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection while section B includes questions on talent management and organizational performance. The researcher used face and content validity. Test-retest and Cronbach's alpha was used to verify the internal consistency of each construct. The Cronbach's Alpha results show that talent retention, training and development, talent attraction and organizational performance recorded reliability coefficients of 0.79, 0.74, and 0.71 respectively. Based on the threshold, they are found to be reliable for the study. The analysis of data was performed using SPSS package. This involved descriptive analysis. Data were cleaned before analysis to ensure that they were correctly captured from source documents. Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the effect of talent management and organizational performance. P value was considered significant at level 0.05.

Table 1 below shows the population of this study consists of 1824 employees of the ten pharmaceutical companies in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.

S/N	Name	Address	Population
1	**Base Pharma, company Nigeria Limited**	31, Ebong Umoitong Street, Ikot Ebido, Uyo, Akwa Ibom, Nigeria	91
2	**Jubilee Syringe Manufacturing Company Limited**	1 Jubilee Close off Jubilee Road, Awa, Onna L.G.A. Akwa Ibom	199
3	Bayelsa and Cross River States.	There is currently no pharmaceutical manufacturing company in these states.	NIL
4	**Surelife Pharmaceutical Industry Limited**	1, S.I. Onyia Close, By Factory Road, Okwe, Asaba, Delta.	246
5	**Zunamediks Pharm Company Limited**	16, GBC Murphy Avenue, Opposite MTN, Off Benin-Asaba Expressway, Asaba, Delta State	98
6	**Edo Pharmaceuticals**	41, 1st Federal Road, Off Okhoro	100

	Limited	Road, Benin City, Edo State.	
7	**Esehi Pharmaceutical Industries Limited**	4b 2nd Isiuwa Lane, Off Murtala Muhammed Way, Benin City, Edo State	250
8	**J. C. Udeozor and Sons Global Pharmaceutical Industries Limited**	10/12 Izu-Osayogie Road, Iguosa, Benin City, Edo State	220
9	**Nomagbon Pharmaceuticals Limited**	43, Oyemwen Street, Off Upper Lawani, New Benin, Benin City, Edo State	120
10	**Service Pharmaceutical Company Ltd**	21 Ewere Street off Eweka Road, Upper Sakponba, Benin City in Edo state	200
11	**Gentlehills Limited**	11 New Layout Drive, Trans Amadi, Port Harcourt, Rivers State	300
		TOTAL	**1824**

Sourced from the internet, July 2023

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Administration and Retrieval of Instruments

Table 2 below shows the number of questionnaires distributed, the numbers retrieved and the number deemed suitable for the analysis. Note that the copies of the questionnaire not properly filled were not fit for screening requirements and therefore not used for the analysis.

Table 2: Questionnaire Distribution and Return

Option		**Percentage**
Number Distributed	356	100%
Number Return	332	93.3
Number Completed	332	93.3
Number Not Completed	21	5.9
Number Missing	2	0.6

Source: Field Survey, 2023/SPSS

Table 2 reveals that a total of three hundred and fifty six (356) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, out of which three hundred and thirty two (332) was properly filled and found relevant to the study. 21 copies were not properly filled and 2 got missing. Therefore, the analysis in this section will be based on the three hundred and thirty two relevant copies.

RESULTS

Presentation of Data relevant to the Research Questions

Here, data relevant in answering the research question and testing the hypotheses were presented in tables below.

Table 3: Respondents View on Whether Organization Identifies and Prepares Suitable High Potential Employees to Replace Key Players.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Agree	126	37	37.0
Strongly Agree	114	34	34
Strongly Disagree	12	4	4.0
Neutral	48	15	15
Disagree	32	10	10
Total	332	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023/SPSS

Greater percentage, 37% of respondents, agree that organization identifies and prepares suitable high potential employees to replace key players, 34% strongly agree, 4% are neutral, 15% disagree while 10% of respondents strongly disagree.

Table 4: Respondents Opinion on Organization Systematic Succession Plans

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Agree	131	40	40
Strongly Agree	117	35	35
Strongly Disagree	25	8	8
Neutral	20	10	6
Disagree	39	100	11
Total	332		100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023/SPSS

Table 4 reveals that 35% of the respondent strongly agrees that organization has systematic succession plans, enabling employees to effectively perform roles traditionally reserved for managers 40% agree, 8% are neutral, 6 % disagree while 11% of respondents strongly disagree.

Table 5: Respondents View on Whether Organization Succession Planning Programs Strongly Influences Staff Retention

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Agree	18	5	5
Strongly Agree	14	4	4
Strongly Disagree	158	48	48
Neutral	113	34	34
Disagree	29	9	9
Total	332	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023/SPSS

Table 5 shows that 48% of the respondents agree that organization succession planning programs strongly influences staff retention 34% strongly agree, 9 % are neutral, and 5% disagree while 4 % of respondents strongly disagree.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression result was employed to test the effect of independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The result of the multiple regression analysis is presented in the tables below.

Table 6: Summary of the Regression Result

The result of the multiple regression formulated is presented in the tables below.

Variables	Variables Entered	Method Removed	
1TAR,	**TRA, TAT**	**Enter**	
-----			

a. Dependent Variable: O P
　　 b. Ail requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
R Square Change		F Change	df1df2 Durbin Watson					
1	.294	.686	.572	3.185	.086	6.151	5	326
a 1.875								

a. Predictors:(Constant),　　 TAR,　TRA, TAT, b. Dependent Variable: OP

x

Table 6 shows that R^2 which measures the strength of the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable have the value of .572. This implies that 69% of the variation in organizational performance is explained by variations in talent retention, training and development, talent attraction. This was supported by adjusted R^2 of .086. In order to check for auto correlation in the model, Durbin-Watson statistics was employed. Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.875 in table 6 shows that the variables in the model are not auto correlated and that the model is reliable for predications.

b. Table 7: ANOVA Result

Model	Sum of SquaresSquare	df	Mean.	F	Sig.
Regression	312.052	5	62.410	6.151	.000b
Residual	3307.502	326	10.146		
Total	3619.554	331			

a. Predictors: (Constant), TAR, TR, TAT, b.
b. Dependent Variable: OP

The f-statistics value of 6.151 in table 7 with f-statistics probability of 6.151 shows that the independent variables have significant effect on dependent. This shows that talent retention, training and development, and talent attraction can collectively explain the variations in organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies.

Table 8: Coefficients of the Model

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistic's	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	18.916	1.918	.158	9.863	.000	.930 1.075	
TAR	.123	.043			2.870	.004	
TRA	.171	.044.209		1.901	.176	.978 1.023	
TAT	076	.049.185		2.562	.009	.941 1.063	

a. Dependent Variable: OP

Source: SPSS 23.0

Table 8 shows the coefficient of the individual variables and their probability values. Talent retention has regression coefficient of .123, a probability value of .004. This implies that stress associated with Talent retention has a positive

but insignificant effect on employee performance. Furthermore, training has a regression coefficient of .171 with a probability value of .176. This implies that training has a negative and significant effect on employee performance. On a similar note, talent attraction has a coefficient value of .076 and a probability value of .009. This shows that talent attraction has a negative and significant effect on employee performance. Finally, assurance has a coefficient value of .028 and a probability value of .000. This shows that assurance has a negative and significant effect on employee performance.

Hypothesis One

Ho: Talent retention has no positive significant relationship with organizational performance

Ho^1: Talent retention has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance

In testing this hypothesis, the t-statistics and probability value are used. Talent retention has a statistics of 9.863 and a probability value of .000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that talent retention has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance.

Hypothesis Two

Ho: Training and development has no positive significant relationship with organizational performance

Hi: Training and development has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance, training and development has a t-statistics of 3.632 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Training has a significant influence on organizational performance.

Hypothesis Three

Ho: Talent attraction has no positive significant relationship with organizational performance.

Hi: Talent attraction has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance

Talent attraction has a t-statistics of 2.923 and a probability value of .005 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses and conclude that talent attraction has a significant effect on organizational performance

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of talent management and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analysis. The result of the multiple analysis shows that talent retention has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. This finding is consistent with that of Agrela (2018) who noted that talent strategies enable an organization to pursue high productivity and improved results through talent management. Agrela (2018) argued that talent strategies enabled organizations to focus on factors that affect employee retention leading to growth and success of organizations as employees' productivity is enhanced through talent programs within the organizations. This finding agrees with the organizations of future talents which are needed at all organizational levels. Talent retention process is supported by Guthridge, Harttig, Komm and Lawson (2018) who noted that the primary role of talent retention is to enhance easy identification to obtain an optimal talent positioning level that refers to having the correct talent at both the right time and place. This is in line with Aswathappa (2018) argument that training and development improves current or future organizational performance by improving an employee's ability to perform through learning, usually by changing attitudes or increasing skills and knowledge. This finding is confirmed by Cheboi (2014) argument that employee training generates an improvement in productivity-related benefits for both the organization and the employee. Finally, the study found that talent attraction has a significant effect on organizational performance.

This study agrees with the findings of Ballesteros (2018): employer branding includes development of an organization's image, which is good enough to attract employees. In order to attract the best, organizational branding is a useful strategy; the organizations that manage their corporate brands effectively gain advantage in the highly competitive global market place. Tanuja (2017) noted that top rated companies have one characteristic in common, that is, they give clear and consistent messages about themselves and that translates into a strong pull on talents. Oehley (2017) agrees with the findings that employees measure value proposition based on the challenge the job possess, work environment, training opportunities, flexibility and reputation of the organization.

Summary of Findings

This study examines the effects of talent management and organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria. The study adopted simple percentage analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis in

analyzing the data generated. The data analyzed show that:

1. Talent retention has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. Talent Retention has a t-statistics of 9.863 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant.

2. Training and development has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. Training and development has a t-statistics of 3.632 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant.

3. Talent attraction has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies. Talent attraction has a t-statistics of 2.923 and a probability value of .005 which is statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the effects of talent management and organizational performance using pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria. The analysis shows that talent retention has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. Training and development have a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. Talent attraction has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance. Therefore, the study concludes that talent management has a positive significant relationship with organizational performance in pharmaceutical companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations emanated:

1. Management should make retention a priority since an organization's future success is not only dependent on its financial resources but ultimately depends on the strength of effective talent management.

2. Management should not focus on attracting talented individuals but should do more to retain top talents as it would advantageous to the pharmaceutical companies.

3. There should be an unbiased, reliable way to identify talented employees and training and development programs should be conducted for retaining those employees.

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A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of Sefi Atta's *Swallow*

Lisa Erhuvwu Tarhe

Abstract

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive lexico-semantic analysis of Sefi Atta's novel, *Swallow*. *Swallow* is a novel that explores the theme of identity, migration and the challenges faced by women in a changing society. Utilizing the combination of corpus linguistic and semantic analysis, this study examines the lexicon and semantic structure employed in *Swallow* to shed light on the author's linguistic choices and underlying meanings. The key lexico-semantic elements for this study are synonyms, collocation, substitution, reference and linguistic variations. By analyzing the lexical choices, it examines how language is used to construct and convey complex characters, relationships and socio-cultural dynamics within the text. It also investigates the semantic nuances embedded within the text, highlighting their contributions to the overall meaning and themes of the novel. The methodology involves a close reading of the novel combined with a systematic analysis of relevant linguistic features. A quantitative approach will be applied to identify the recurrent lexical patterns and semantic fields used in the text. This study aims to highlight the significance of the lexico-semantic study as a linguistic approach used for demonstrating how linguistic choices can enrich the narrative, deepen messages and offer insight into the socio-cultural fabric of a particular setting.

Keywords: lexico-semantic, Swallow, dialectal features and linguistic approach

INTRODUCTION

Writers communicate their message through the use of the linguistic features that make up the structure of language. Communication is an important factor which authors or scholars consider when deploying their intended message to their audience. It is impossible for a human being to pass information without the use of language. It is hard for any intellectual or artistic activity to take place in its absence. According to Wibowo (2001:3), language is a system of symbols that are meaningful and articulate sound which are arbitrary and conventional, which are used as a means of communication by a group of human beings to give birth to feelings and thoughts.

The scope and diversity of human thought and expression are placed in great demand on language and how it is employed in a particular context. Scholars use language to display their style and creativity of communicating to their readers on a subject matter. Oladipupo (2004:35) opines that the writer uses language as a tool to reveal meaning that serves as a means of reflection on the human condition and aiding cohesion. The linguistic devices used for

determining the context of a writer's message can be lexical, grammatical, semantic and social variations. Literary writers produce their text by exploring the use of linguistic elements. Lexis is the vocabulary, words, sentences or morphemes in a language. Semantics is the meaning of words or utterances in a language. Lexico-semantics explains the meaning related to words and sentence level in a text. It involves the in-depth meaning of words or phrases related to how it is interpreted in the mind of the reader. Abioye (2014) asserts that lexico-semantic is comprising of words, phrases and idiomatic expression that are related in meaning. Sefi Atta's novel *Swallow* presents a rich tapestry of Nigerian society and culture, exploring themes of identity, migration, and the challenges faced by women. It was published in 2008. However, there is a gap in the understanding of the lexico-semantic elements employed in the novel and their contribution to the overall meaning and themes. Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is the need for a comprehensive lexico-semantic analysis of Sefi Atta's *Swallow* to uncover the linguistic choices, cultural references, and semantic structures that shape the narrative and enhance the reader's understanding of the novel. This paper examines the prominent lexical choices, recurring semantic patterns and semantic shifts in the narrative. Also, the study demonstrates Atta's mastery of language and her ability to paint a vivid picture of Nigerian society through the use of certain dialectal features that are socially accepted in the clime it is used. Sefi Atta is a contemporary Nigerian who sojourns in the United States and the United Kingdom. She has won several awards. Her novel *Everything Good Will Come* won the Wole Soyinka Prize for literature in 2006. Most of her novels are highly accepted in English-speaking countries and this has given her a place among the most relevant twentieth-century writers in the world today. Her works display certain ideologies which focus on socio-political and gender commitment.

Edebor (2015) reviews *Swallow* by examining the image of the male gender against the backdrop of the oppression of women by men in an African society. He concluded that both genders can coexist without one being subsumed by the other. He further explains that Atta describes the male gender as a tyrant who exploits their women in domestic duties, income and procreation to cover up their inadequacies.

Olufunwa (2012) analyses the novel on the rising issue that Nigerian women are less prepared to bemoan gender injustice labelled on them, rather than make a conscious effort to improve their own lives. This paper explains how the women in society strive to fight through any form of oppression imposed on them by their male counterparts.

Nwiyi (2014) analyses *Swallow* from the feminist perspective. The research explores the thematic and narrative concerns from a largely gendered view. It

narrates how the female gender is vulnerable to socio-economic victimisation as portrayed in the novel. This is because of the social and cultural factors that are largely associated with their gender (female) and also how they survive in a Nigerian polity or circumstance that tends to take advantage of the girl child sexually, emotionally and physically.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The field theory is used for the data analysis. The theory was introduced in 1931 by Jost Trier. He postulates that words acquire their meaning through their relationship with other words within the same word class. He considered the vocabulary of a language as a system of words related in a sense. Cruse (2004:148) classifies sense relation into two groups. Those that express identity and inclusion between words meaning and those that express opposition and exclusions. He states that lexical fields are easily definable with no overlapping meaning. For instance, the words 'bake', 'steam', 'fry', and 'roast' can be classified under the word 'cooking'. The meaning of words can be determined through the use of sense. This means to know the meaning of any lexemes, the relationship between them should be explained. Lexical units are an aspect of the field theory. The devices that will be examined in this paper by employing this theory are synonyms, hyponyms, collocation and a variety of Nigerian English or dialectal features.

METHODOLOGY

The method of this study is qualitative. It offers an effective way of describing phrases or expressions used by the author in creating context. The primary source of data is the novel *Swallow*. The data for the analysis are key lexical units such as synonyms, hyponyms, collocations, substitution and words or phrases that are dialectal features. These devices are collected to show the relationship between words and concepts in the novel and to shed light on the author's intended meaning and thematic concerns. The lexical and semantic elements were randomly selected from different chapters, paragraphs and pages in the novel. These lexical and semantic patterns were investigated to explore how the writer reflects the social and political aspects of the text by paying attention to the linguistic elements, cultural nuances and other varieties. Some of the extracted words are itemised using a tabular form and sentence structure. The secondary sources of data are journals, articles and studies by other researchers/research. They analyze and evaluate information found in the primary source of data.

SYNONYMY

Synonymy is the semantic relationship that exists between words with closely related meanings or nearest in meaning. Richard and Schmidt (2002:533)

define synonymy as 'a word which has the same sense or nearly the same as another word'. For example: difficult-hard, place-residence. Also, these words are used to replace another to avoid repetition of the same word. The following are extracted synonyms from the text:

Extract A

1. May this and that be <u>dashed</u> and <u>crushed</u> and <u>destroyed,</u> all in the name of Jesus. (SWL P. 147)

2. definitely were not women who sat around <u>contemplating</u> sins or <u>wondering</u> where the drugs came from and where the drugs were going Pakistan, Amsterdam. (SWL P.137)

3. No one ever wants to give <u>support</u> or <u>encouragement</u>. SWL (P. 24)

The use of the underlined synonyms is to create, convey different meanings and expressions of her main theme to her readers. Extract A (1) shows the speaker's use of the words, 'dashed', 'crushed', and 'destroyed' to explain his feeling of hatred for evil powers. These words indicate how words can be used to explain someone's feelings. In Extract A (2), the words 'contemplating' and 'wondering' are nearest in meaning. The statement was made by Rose to her friend Tolani to assure her that swallowing drugs should not be something she should be afraid of, because some ladies did it without thinking about the consequences.

HYPONYMY

Hyponymy means the super- and subordinate relationships between words. The meaning of a word is included in the super-ordinate form. For example: 'sweeping, scrubbing, and mopping' have the included meaning from the headword 'Cleaning'. The table below contains hyponyms extracted from the novel.

EXTRACT B	SUPER-ORDINATE	CO-HYPONYMS	
1	Services	Car repairs, tailoring, photocopying and hairdressing.	SWL (P.26)
2	Pedigree	Dobermans, Rottweilers, Mongrels.	SWL (P. 71)
3	Simple tables	Four ferries two, four ferries thee, four ferries four	SWL (P.107)
4	Car park	Volkswagen, Benzes, Peugeots	SWL (P. 146)

Extract H1 and H2 are descriptive. The hyponym explains the kind of services rendered by different labour forces and describes the species of dog breeds. These words illustrate that their meaning is included in the super-ordinate word. The relationship between the words shows that the meaning is attached to the headword. This is used by the writer to explore her underlying message in different climes in her text by engaging the readers' understanding of her choice of linguistic device.

COLLOCATION

Collocation is a sequence of words that occur more often or belong together. Examples are beautiful lady, handsome man, pull-down, old fashioned, cut off and so on. The words in the table below are examples of collocation:

EXTRACT C	COLLOCATES	TEXT
1	Lovey-dovey	SWL (P. 7)
2	Greyish white	SWL (P. 9)
3	Mid-morning	SWL (P.32)
4	Well - known	SWL (P.54)
5	Play wrestled	SWL (P.72)
6	Air-conditioned	SWL (P.35)
7	Step aside	SWL (P.43)
8	High heeled	SWL (P.47)

These collocates are both conventional and unconventional. Some of the examples are coinage that is accepted in a particular context it is used. Extract C (1) is an example of a conventional collocation. The phrase is an adjective which explains the kind of love Rose thinks Tolani's boyfriend is displaying. She feels Sanwo is being too sentimental about the commitment that comes with marriage. Extract C2 is a coinage. The words are formed with the added word 'white'. This phrase creates a different meaning from the original word. The lexical item is used to describe the colour of houses in the novel. Extract C3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 are collocates that are conventional. C3: mid-morning implies the time before noon. C4: well known indicates the popularity of an individual or a thing. C6: air-conditioned is used to explain how friendly Tolani's workplace is comfortable to customers. C8: high heeled is a part of shoes that supports the foot heel. Extract C5 is unconventional. The words are formed to create an extra meaning to the writer's message. This phrase is used by the

author to describe the kind of romance acted by Tolani and her boyfriend Sanwo.

SUBSTITUTION

It is the replacement of a word or phrase with other words such as 'one', 'so', or 'do' to avoid repetition. Substitution is used to avoid redundancy in a particular context. Let's examine the following extracted sentences:

EXTRACT D

1. Fear had turned me into a hard woman I initially pretended to be (P.96)

2. Mr Salako didn't emerge from his office to officiate as he normally did. (P.153)

3. Wasn't their mother crazy too? How do you know is not hereditary? It was a matter of time before Rose went off. (P. 51)

4. Rose, I said, I don't understand. This is the man you can't walk away from? After my journey, she said. I will (P. 157)

The underlined lexical items show the writer's style of avoiding the repetition of the same word thereby reducing the length of the utterance. Examples 1, 2 and 4 are verbal substitutions. The writer uses an auxiliary verb to refer back to the meaning of the main utterance. Extract 3 is an example of verbal substitution, but the phrase is changed to emphasize the author's message.

DIALECTAL FEATURES

This is a specific feature of an utterance that makes it agreeable to the language user's linguistic sense which is the choice of words used by the writer to create a context that is understandable and meaningful to the reader/receiver or audience. The words below are dialectal features that are accepted in a Nigerian clime:

EXTRACT E	DIALECTAL FEATURES
1	Esusu group (P.24)
2	4-1-9"(P.105)
3	Pomade (P.132)
4	Roforofo (P.142)
5.	Oyinbo (P.33)
6.	Ole (P.13)
7.	Bobo (P.7)
8.	Area Boys (P.73)
9	Papa (P.42)

4-1-9: a slang used by Nigerians which means the fraudster.

Pomade: a word used to refer to body cream. This is a variety of Nigerian English.

Roforofo: a word used by Nigerians to refer to gossip.

Esusu group: a contribution scheme that deals with monthly, weekly or yearly savings of an individual's money.

Oyinbo: this is a neologism used for addressing Westerners. This lexical term is socially acceptable by Nigerian speakers because the meaning of the word can be deduced.

Ole: This refers to addressing someone as a thief. It is a form of a variety of broken/pidgin used by Nigerians.

Bobo: This is a dialectal feature that is used to address a guy.

Area boys: This is also a form of Nigerian variety that refers to one behaving like a tout or hoodlum.

Papa: This is a variety of Nigerian English that is used for addressing a man who is an elder or a father figure.

These examples also indicate that some of the words are derived due to one's mother tongue interference. Most words derived from Nigerian English are code mixed with English to create a sense of belonging when used for communication within a particular group or ethnic group. The example used by Atta is to incorporate these elements to gain readers' acceptability that her characters are Nigerians, existing in a Nigeria clime. Atta uses the words to create awareness of certain formations that could be accepted by the readers who could comprehend the meaning of any message in the text because most of the phrases or expressions include a variety of existing patterns of English used by Nigerians.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of Sefi Atta's *Swallow* based on the linguistic and semantic features found within the novel. Through a meticulous examination of the text, this study explores the intricate relationship between language and meaning, shedding light on the deeper layers of Sefi Atta's work. The research delves into the lexicon employed by the author, uncovering the richness and diversity of vocabulary that Atta employs to construct her narrative. The study reveals how Atta skillfully employs words,

phrases, and expressions to create vivid imagery, evoke emotions, and convey cultural nuances.

Furthermore, the study explores the semantic dimensions present in *Swallow*. It highlights the various layers of meaning embedded within the text, including cultural, social, and historical aspects. By examining the semantic associations of key terms and concepts, the analysis uncovers the deeper messages and thematic threads that underpin Atta's storytelling. This study provides a valuable contribution to the understanding and appreciation of Atta's novel. The study brings attention to the intricate web of language and meaning woven throughout the text, shedding light on the linguistic brilliance and thematic depth of Atta's narrative. By analyzing the lexicon and semantics of *Swallow*, this research enriches our understanding of the novel and invites further exploration into the complexities of Sefi Atta's literary world.

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Writer's Brief Data

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Substance Abuse and Its Devastating Health Effect on the Youths of Onitsha Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

Substance/drug abuse is emerging as a global public health issue that poses a huge concern to everyone world over. The recent world drug report-2021 of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated that over 275 million people across the globe used drugs, while over 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders. As the 2021 National Drug Use Survey revealed, in Nigeria at that time there were around 17.3 million drug users of which close to 5 million suffered from drug use disorder. This study investigated substance abuse and its devastating health effect on the youths of Onitsha Metropolis, Nigeria. In line with its specific objectives, the study investigated the drugs commonly used or abused by Onitsha youths, examined the factors influencing Onitsha youths to use or abuse drugs, explored the sources of drugs commonly abused by Onitsha youths, and determined the devastating health effect of drug abuse among Onitsha youths. The study used the general strain theory of Agnew Robert (1992) in explaining the social phenomena studied. The study population comprised of 69143 youths in Onitsha aged 16 years and above (both male and female), and a total of four hundred and five (405) respondents were selected using purposive sampling techniques from the five selected districts in Onitsha, purposively selected. Data were collected via questionnaire and In-depth Interview (IDI). Findings revealed that peer pressure, pleasure seeking, curiosity, quest to relieve stress, quest to belong to the social circle of the big boys and girls, amongst others, were reasons for drug use and abuse. Based on the findings, this study recommends thus: Anambra State government should as a matter of urgency enhance the use of task forces and greater collaboration among regulatory bodies responsible for drugs and substances control – NDLEA, NAFDAC and PCN – to stem drug abuse in the state; the state government should provide more educational and employment opportunities to the youths; and there should be greater involvement of parents in the guidance of their children and in strengthening the marriage institution for effective upbringing of children.

Keywords: abuse, devastating, health, substance, youths, Onitsha

Introduction and Motivation for the Study

Drug abuse is a global health and social problem with distinct conditions and problems that vary locally (World Health Organization [WHO], 2017). The use of psychoactive substances among adolescents and youths has become a subject of public concern worldwide due to the fact that it contributes to

deliberate or unintended harm/injury (Whichstrom & Hegna, 2013; Daane, 2013). Drug abuse, addiction and trafficking cut across socioeconomic, cultural, religious, and ethnic boundaries (Oyakhilome, 2020). Despite the efforts of the three tiers of government and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to stem its tide in Nigeria, there has been a consistent increase in the number of drug-related cases, especially among youths between 10-25 years of age (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency [NDELA], 1993).

Substance abuse is a serious issue, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. It is a global issue. Drug abuse is also a major individual, social and public health problem and is seen as an aggravating factor for economic crises, and may have contributed to Nigeria's poverty status. While youths are supposed to be the major agents of change and development, some of them have been destroyed by drug abuse (rendering them unproductive). Drug abuse has become a great concern in Nigeria because of its effect on the youths and the nation as a whole. The overall health of the user is affected negatively and behaviors associated with drug abuse predispose the abuser to crime and contagious diseases, including HIV/AIDS (Center for Disease Control, 2020).

Substance abuse is a global challenge with detrimental effects on health, wealth, and security of nations (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2010). The prevalence of health-risky behaviour associated with adolescents and illicit drug use has attracted growing international recognition. Drug abuse remains a major health challenge all over the world (UNODC, 2005). These health effects may occur after just one use. Drug use can have a wide range of short and long term, direct and indirect effects. These effects often depend on the specific drug or drugs used, how they are taken, the person's health and other factors. Short term effects can range from changes in appetite, wakefulness, heart rate, blood pressure, and/or mood swings to heart attack, stroke, psychosis, overdose, and even death. The long term effects include heart or lung disease, cancer, mental illness, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and others (Jacobs, & Steyn, 2013). Drug use among adolescents and young adults has become quite widespread during the past 25 years, with many characterizing the increases as of epidemic proportions. Although it may not be surprising that many teenagers have experimented at some time with various drugs, problems begin to arise when this experimental use becomes regular use or abuse.

The impact of drug abuse among Nigerian youths has also been associated with the loss of our societal values and ideals (Aluede, 2000). Drugs alter the normal biological and psychological functioning of the body, especially the central nervous system (Melisa, Christiana; Steven; Jessica; Macfallen; Carmel; Choi; Donald; Desire; Seth; Kalichman; & Cathlyn, 2014). Majority of

the Nigerian youths ignorantly depend on one form of drug or the other (such as tobacco, Indian hemp, cocaine, morphine, heroine, alcohol, ephedrine, Madras, caffeine, glue, barbiturates and amphetamines) for their various daily activities (Oshikoya and Alli, 2006). The prevalence of illicit drug use among youths has attracted growing international recognition. Unfortunately, adolescents and young adults may underrate the harmful effects of unhealthy life styles (McMaster and Keshav, 1994).

These unpleasant youthful activities are widespread in Nigeria and all over Africa, thus giving a lot of concern to the government and the general public (Greene, 1980). Drug abuse remains a major health challenge all over the world (UNODC, 2005). And this is a real concern because the health of young people is a key factor in the promotion and preservation of the health of the population as a whole; it determines the overall level of the population's health in the short term (Tsverkova, & Antonova, 2013).

The abuse of drugs in Nigeria is caused by many factors, including love for money by peddlers, disobedience to the laws of the country, proliferation of the market with individuals who sell medicines, lack of control of prescription drugs in the healthcare facilities and indiscriminate dispensing of drugs. Other reasons for abuse of drugs include smuggling substances of abuse through our porous seaports and land borders, corruption and compromises at the point of entries, diversion of legitimate exports to illicit use, weakness in inspections and weak penalties for the sellers and traffickers. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated substance abuse and its devastating health effect on the youths of Onitsha metropolis, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

This study specifically sought to:

1. Investigate the drugs that are commonly used or abused by Onitsha youths

2. Examine the influencing factors of Onitsha youths to drug abuse

3. Explore the sources of the commonly abused drugs among Onitsha youths

4. Determine the devastating health effect of drug abuse among Onitsha youths

Review of Related Literature

A review of the literature clearly indicates that there has been a steady increase in the prevalence of drug use and its associated consequences within the last three decades (Ihezue, 1988; Oshodi, Aina, & Onaiole, 2010; Dewling, Pluddermann, Myers, & Parry, 2006). Almost all types of psychoactive

substances are available in Nigeria due to their spill over into the streets from drug traffickers who use Nigeria as a conduit to transport drugs from South East-Asia (the Golden Triangle) and South America (Bolivia, Peru, and Brazil) to Europe and North America (Klein, 1994). There is high prevalence among youths (Okafor, 2011). The desire to explore and experiment, and peer pressure are some of the factors responsible for these prevalence. The excessive usage of such substances leads to substance abuse. Substance abuse has many negative physiological and psychological health effects.

Drug abuse continues to be a strategy adopted by youths to cope with various socioeconomic and psychological problems. There are many social factors that have resulted in abuse of drugs. These include decline of family value system, parents not playing their roles properly, children and youths therefore not receiving proper guidance, peer pressure, social media influence, poverty and unemployment. Keeping in mind that youths are a vulnerable population, it is crucial for all and sundry to address this matter.

Drug: Conceptual Clarification

The definition of drugs as stated in the International Convention of 1961 for Narcotic drugs, and that of 1971 for psychotropic substances, includes all substances and chemicals that should not be used for any purpose other than for medical and scientific research. To date, there are 131 internationally controlled drugs which are to be used under strict medical prescription and/or for scientific research. If used for purposes otherwise, they are called illicit drugs. In the past two decades, drug use has spread widely at an unprecedented rate and has reached every part of the globe (Fissehaye, Kassaye; &Teklu, 1999).

Substance Abuse: Conceptual Clarification

Substance/drug abuse is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress as manifested by one or more of the following occurring within a 12 month period: recurrent substance use resulting in the failure to fulfil major roles like obligations at work, school or in the home; recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous – for example, driving automobile when impaired by substances use; recurrent substance related legal problems and continued substances use despite recurrent social and interpersonal problems (Morojele, & Ramsoomar, 2016).

Commonly Abused Drugs by Youths in Nigeria/Onitsha

Most scholars and literatures reviewed indicated that the most frequently implicated drugs consistently reported by the majority of the studies were

cannabis cannabis, cocaine, amphetamine, heroin, diazepam, codeine, cough syrup and tramadol. Scholars like Nouh, El-Tayeb, Said, Radwan, & El-Fiki (2007) in a study observed that alcohol, cannabis and prescription drugs were common practices in drug abuse. Also, Onyenecho, Pindar, Ibrahim, Mishelia, Jidda, & John (2020) found that there was rampant abuse of tramadol, marijuana, and cigarette, making them the most widely abused drugs. Tramadol users constituted the highest number (56.2 percent), marijuana smokers were 46.3 percent and cigarette smokers were 37.9 percent. The findings also revealed that alcohol and injectable drugs were also among the drugs mostly abused by youths in the area.

Factors Influencing Drug Abuse among Youths in Onitsha

Many factors account for why Nigerian and Onitsha youths engage in drug abuse. In a study conducted by Ibrahim, Amit, Din, & Ong (2017) on the highest influencing factor leading to substance misuse among youths, it was found that 70 percent of youths engaged in substance/drug abuse due to peer pressure while 28 percent reported improper care by parents. Also, Dankami (2012), in a study found that more than half (57 percent) of youths learned illicit drug intake through intermingling with their friends in the Northwestern states. Another study done by Simons-Morton & Tilda (2010), on the influence of peer group and smoking habits by other substance users, as well as Al-hawqi (2010), found that a significant number (62 percent) of youths engage themselves in drug abuse as a result of friends' influence.

Similarly, Dukku (2012), in a study, found the following factors as encouraging youths drug abuse behavior: poverty, unemployment, joblessness/idleness, broken homes, inadequate parental supervision, entertainment, curiosity, the influence of peer group, the influence of politicians as well as availability and easy access to drugs. All of these are pushing youths into drugs intake.

Sources of Drugs Commonly Abused by Youths in Nigeria/Onitsha

Most scholars and literatures reviewed indicated the most commonly abused drugs by youths include cannabis, cocaine, amphetamine, heroin, diazepam, codeine, cough syrup and tramadol. Sources where abusers obtained these drugs were pharmacies/patent medicine shops, open drug markets, drug hawkers, fellow drug abusers, friends, and drug pushers. Only few studies reported the sources of the drugs being abused. The common sources included: pharmacies/patent medicine shops (Njoku, Harvey, & Jason, 2017; Freeman, Landwehr, McKay, Derzoi, & Bir, 2017; Dawson, Goldstein, Saha, & Grant, 2015), open markets (17%) (Fuhr, & Pociask, 2014), drug hawkers (Dasgupta, 2013; Argyropoulos & Nutt, 2013), hawkers of traditional herbal preparations

(Doherty & Gaughran, 2014), fellow drug abusers (8%) (Njoku, Harvey, & Jason, 2017), underground agents (57%) (Edafiadhe, 2005), family members (1.6–33%) (Abubakar, Abubakar, Kabir, Zayyanu, Garba, Isa, Wada, & Mohammed, 2021), friends (up to 61%) (Ju, & Odejide, 1993; Akpala & Bolaji, 1991), teachers (3%) (Edafiadhe, 2005; Ju, & Odejide, 1993), physician (8.3%) (Akpala & Bolaji, 1991), other health practitioners (3.0%) (Akpala & Bolaji, 1991).

Health Effect of Substance/Drug Abuse on Onitsha Youths

Youths who engage in drug abuse may be infected with heart-related ailments such as high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, musculoskeletal, neurological, and respiratory diseases, while those drug addicts who engage themselves in injecting hard drugs into their blood have a high risk of HIV/AIDS infections, cancer of the lungs, throat, stomach, liver cirrhosis, Hepatitis B and C, tuberculosis and diabetes mellitus as well as reproductive health issues such as impotence, low sperm count, likelihood of giving birth to low birth weight babies and babies with fetal alcohol syndrome (Ekpenyoungi, 2012; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2010; Al-Haqwi, 2010; Rice & Dolgin, 2008; Copper, DeBon, Haddock, Esquivel, Klesges, Lando, & Talcott, 2008).

Studies conducted by several other scholars on the negative consequences of psychoactive drugs such as heroin, cocaine lysergic acid diethyl lamide (LSD) amphetamines show that intake of drugs causes sleeping disorder, poor appetite, restlessness, irritability, suicidal depressions, ecstatic paranoia, hallucinations, panic reactions, sensory disorientation and loss of lives. Scholars reported that those abusing heroin were discovered to have suffered "dependence, blood-borne viruses, psychological abnormalities" (Njoku, Harvey, & Jason, 2017). Heavy marijuana as well as tobacco abusers were found to suffer from central nervous system disorders, damage to the endocrine glands and pancreas, heart failures, erectile dysfunctions, hypertension, stroke and capillary hemorrhages, swelling and redness of the face and nose (Argyropoulos & Nutt, 2013). Both substances increase heart beat, narrow blood vessels and cause cancer, tuberculosis and reduced life expectancy rates, distorted brain functioning, paralysis, cardiac attack and death, amongst others (Shehu & Rao, 2020; Cicchetti & Handley, 2019; Brown, Stoffel, & Munez, 2019; Freeman, van der Pol, Kuijpers, Wisselink, Das, Rigter, & Lynskey, 2018; Njoku, Harvey, & Jason, 2017; Freeman, Landwehr, McKay, Derzoi, & Bir, 2017; Dawson, Goldstein, Saha, & Grant, 2015; Doherty & Gaughran, 2014; Blackstone, Fuhr, & Pociask, 2014; Dasgupta, 2013; Argyropoulos & Nutt, 2013; Ekpenyongi, 2012; Carson, Sullivan, Cochran, & Lersch, 2008; Craig, & Baucum, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

This study used the General Strain Theory of Agnew Robert to buttress the social phenomena studied. General Strain Theory (GST) is a sociology and criminology theory developed in 1992 by Robert Agnew. Agnew believed that Merton's theory was too vague in nature and did not account for criminal activity which did not involve financial gain. The core idea of general strain theory is that people who experience strain or stress become distressed or upset which may lead them to commit crime in order to cope. One of the key principles of this theory is emotion as the motivator for crime. The theory was developed to conceptualize the full range of sources in society where strain possibly comes from, which Merton's strain theory does not. The theory also focuses on the perspective of goals for status, expectations and class rather than focusing on money (as Merton's theory does). Examples of General Strain Theory are people who use illegal drugs to make themselves feel better, or a student assaulting his peers to end the harassment they caused (Agnew, 2015; Agnew, 2014; Agnew, 2001).

GST introduces 3 main sources of strain such as (Paternoster & Mazerolle, 1994)

1. Loss of positive stimuli (death of family or friend)
2. Presentation of negative stimuli (physical and verbal assaults)
3. The inability to reach a desired goal.

Applying this theory to study stresses associated with various youths in Onitsha would reveal emotional instabilities and diverse forms of disaffections that could result to resort to drug abuse to relieve oneself of the problems.

Methodology

This study used descriptive survey research design with both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study population comprises of 787,594 youths, including males and females, from the age of 16 years and above in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria. As regards sample size and sampling technique, the study utilizes two stages sampling techniques. The first stage involves the selection of five residential areas (Awada Layout, Isiafor Layout, Odoakpu, Onitsha, and Upper-Iweka) in Onitsha metropolis with each selected area allotted 81 samples bringing the total to four hundred and five. The second stage involves selection of sample of 81 respondents from each of the selected residential areas. The sample size of youths in the selected area is four hundred and five respondents (405), and they were all chosen as sample for the study using purposive sampling techniques.

Data were collected by means of structured questionnaire and through In-depth

interviews (IDI). The questionnaire contained both open and closed-ended questions. It was divided into two sections. Section A consists of questions on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents regarding their gender, age (in years), marital status, educational level, and religious affiliation. Section B focuses on other substantive issues bothering on the study.

Statistical Analysis

The data collected through questionnaire were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 and statistically analyzed using descriptive techniques such as frequencies, percentage and weighted mean, while the field notes from the interview generated in the course of the field work were summarized, and then content analyzed manually.

Results and Discussion

A total of four hundred and five (405) copies of questionnaires were administered out of which three hundred and eighty-four (384) representing (94.81percent) were suitable for analysis, while the remaining twenty-one (21) representing (5.19 percent) were invalid and not used in the analysis. The analysis carried out in this paper is in two sections. Section A focuses on the analysis of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics while section B centres on the analysis of the objectives of the study.

Section A: Analysis of the Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents   N= 384

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	220	57. 3
	Female	164	42. 7
Age (in years)	Less than 18 years	40	10. 4
	18-22 years	186	48. 4
	23- 27 years	114	29. 7
	28 years and above	44	11. 5
Marital Status	Never married	294	76. 6
	Married	76	19. 8
	Separated/Widowed	14	3. 7
Religious Affiliation	Christianity	279	72. 7
	Islam	105	27. 3
Education Level	No formal education	16	4. 2
	Primary school education	114	29. 7
	Secondary Education	156	40. 6
	Tertiary Education	98	25. 5
Total		**384**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 above shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. From the table, majority (57.3 percent) of the respondents were male, while the remaining (42.7 percent) were female. This finding indicates that more males than females took part in the study. The age of the respondents show that majority of them (48.4 percent) were between ages 18-22 years. About 29.7

percent were between ages of 23-27 years, 11.5 percent were between 28 years and above, while the remaining 10.4 percent of the respondents were less than 18 years. This result indicates that most of the respondents are young and could want to explore something new.

As regards the marital status of the respondents, majority (76.6 percent) of them never got married (single); 19.8 percent of the respondents were married, while the remaining 3. 7 percent were either separated (who went their separate ways due to divorce or another reason) or widowed (who lost their partners due to death). The high number of the never married (single) indicate that majority of those sampled in Onitsha could still be out to explore the fun inherent in the world of ecstasy.

The religious affiliation of the respondents show that majority (72.7 percent) of the entire respondents were Christians, while the remaining 27.3 percent of the respondents were Muslim. Also, the educational level of the respondents shows that majority (40.6 percent) of them had secondary education certificate, 29.7 percent of the respondents have primary school education certificate, 25.5 percent have tertiary education certificate, while the remaining 4.2 percent have no formal education experience. These results suggest that respondents sampled are averagely or moderately literate and this could help awaken their desire to explore some drug-related experiences common in our globalized world.

In summary, the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents show that majority of them were male, aged between 18-22 years, 23-27 (29.7 percent) years, never married (single), averagely or moderately literate and are Christians.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Commonly Abused Drugs among Onitsha Youths   N=384

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Alcohol	66	17.2
Cannabis (Marijuana)	116	30.2
Cocaine	13	3.4
Methadone/Morphine	14	3.6
Amphetamines	28	7.3
Sedatives (Barbiturate)	13	3.4
Hallucinogen (Mescaline, Diethylamide etc)	9	2.3
Crystal Methamphetamine	36	9.4
Syrups (Codeine), Tramadol	31	8.1
Diazepam	16	4.2
Shisha mix	20	5.2
Tobacco/Loud	22	5.7
Heroin	Nil	Nil
Opium/Valium	NilNil	
Miraa/Bhang	NilNil	
Total	**384**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 above showed the commonly abused drugs among youths of Onitsha metropolis. The responses from the result revealed that 116 of the respondents

(30.2 percent) indicated that Cannabis (Marijuana) was the most abused substance/drugs by youths of Onitsha metropolis; Alcohol consumption among Onitsha youths ranked the second most abused – 66 respondents, representing 17.2 percent; 9.4 percent (36 respondents) indicated abusing Crystal Methamphetamine (NkpuruMmiri); 31 (8.1 percent) of the respondents reported abusing syrups especially Codeine, as well as Tramadol; those who abused Amphetamine constituted 28 (7.3 percent) of the respondents; 22 (5.7 percent) of them abused Shisha mix; 16 of the entire respondents, representing 4.2 percent were involved in the abuse of Diazepam; 14 (3.6 percent) of the respondents were engaged in the abuse of Methadone/Morphine; 13 (3.4 percent) of the respondents were involved in Cocaine substance intake; another 13 (3.4 percent) of the respondents abused Sedatives (Barbiturate). Furthermore, 9 (2.3 percent) of the respondents reported abusing Hallucinogens like Mescaline, Diethylamide amongst others; none of the entire respondents indicated abusing Heroin, Opium/valium or Miraa/Bhang. The above results imply that Onitsha youths engaged in the abuse of different kinds of substances/drugs which possibly posed a myriad of health issues and dangers to the respondents, their families, and the society at large. Supporting the above findings, an interviewee stressed that:

Me and my girls, we smoke shisha mix at home and whenever we go to the club to feel good about ourselves and get along well with the happenings in the club (Youth/ Female/23 years/21 April, 2023/IDI).

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Influencing Factors of Substance Abuse   N=384

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Due to peer group pressure	119	30.9
To stay alert all day to hustle	26	6.8
To relax and relieve stress	20	5.2
Due to curiosity	45	11.7
To stimulate and enhance sexual performance when with partner	31	8.1
Due to availability and easy accessibility of the drugs	33	8.6
To feel among the happening class	37	9.7
Socioeconomic status of parents	23	6.0
Due to the environment we reside in	30	7.8
Most of family member's do drugs	20	5.2
Total	**384**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 above indicates the reasons/factors why youths of Onitsha metropolis abuse drugs. Respondents revealed that the following potent reasons or factors cause the abuse of drugs amongst them. Most of the youths constituting 119 (30.9 percent) of the entire respondents take and abuse drugs due to peer

group/peer pressure, 45 (11.7 percent) of the youths revealed that drug abuse is due to curiosity; 37 (9.7 percent) revealed that they indulge in drug abuse so as to belong to the big boys and girls class (Clique); 33 representing 8.6 percent of the youths stressed that they engage in drug abuse due to the availability and easy accessibility of the drugs around and within Onitsha metropolis; 31 of the entire respondents representing 8.1 percent revealed that they abuse drugs to stimulate and enhance their sexual performance whenever their partners came visiting.

Also, 30 (7.8 percent) of the youths opined that their indulgence in substance abuse was due to the environment they reside; 26 (6.8 percent) of the entire youths take illicit drugs to stay or keep alert all day while hustling for their daily sustenance; 23 (6.0 percent) of the youths revealed that their abuse of drugs was due to the socioeconomic status of their parents; those who abused drugs in order to relax and relieve stress constitute 20 (5.2 percent) while the other remaining youths constituting 20 (5.2 percent) revealed that their substance abuse behavior was due to the fact that most members of the family also abuse drugs. The findings above indicate that there are varied factors influencing Onitsha youths' drug abuse behaviour, with pressure from peer groups being the overriding factor. Corroborating the findings above, an interviewee opined that:

As for me, I take my stuff whenever I want to relax and relieve myself of the societal stress, because I can't kill myself due to survival challenges we face daily in this country (Youth/Female/26 years/22 April, 2023/IDI).

Another interviewee indicated that:

Once, we gather somewhere in the evenings from our daily hustle, my guys do bring some stuffs that we chill out with and reason some matters together on how to make headway in life and bid each other goodnight (Youth/ Male/27 years/20 April, 2023/IDI).

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Sources of Drugs Abused by Onitsha Metropolis Youths N=384

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pharmacy/patent medicine shops	121	31.5
Open drug markets	79	20.5
Drug hawkers	25	6.5
Fellow drug abusers/friends	72	18.8
Drug peddlers/pushers	58	15.1
Dispensary/hospital prescription drugs	29	7.6
Total	**384**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 above showed the sources of the drugs that are frequently abused by youths of Onitsha metropolis. From the result, a little less than half of the entire respondents (121 persons or 31.5 percent) averred that they usually got the substances/drugs they abused from pharmacies/patents medicine shops spread

across the area of study, 79 (20.5 percent) of the respondents indicated they got the drugs from open drugs markets; 72 (18.8 percent) of them stressed that they got the drugs/substances from their fellow drug abusers or friends.

Furthermore, 58 (15.1 percent) of the respondents revealed getting the substances/drugs from drug peddlers/pushers within and around Onitsha metropolis; another, 29 of the respondents constituting 7.6 percent got prescription drugs from dispensaries/hospitals while the remaining 25 (6.5 percent) of the total respondents reported that they got substances/drugs to abuse from drug hawkers spread within and around the streets of Onitsha metropolis. These imply that the sources via which Onitsha youths got substances/drugs to abuse are numerous and spread across the study area and require intensive intelligent overt and covert operations of the NAFDAC and the NDLEA to track, apprehend, and prosecute persons connected with the above mentioned sources of drug peddling networks. Buttressing the above findings, an IDI interviewee reported:

I buy marijuana every day before going out for my daily hustle and after closing in the evenings from one joint down my street to help me relax and reason well (Youth/Male/25 years/22 April, 2023/IDI).

Another interviewee revealed that:

Where to get the stuff is very easy and accessible, I just take a stroll to a football pitch a bit late at night and buy from some guys who usually sell and supply us the stuffs (Youth/Male/24 years/21 April, 2023/IDI).

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents' on the Devastating Health Effect of Drug Abuse on Youths of Onitsha Metropolis   N=384

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Loss of Weight, Fatigue, & Decreased Appetite	98	25.5
Mild Paranoia, Physical Exhaustion, Mental Confusion	53	13.8
Nervousness, Irritability, and Restlessness	42	10.9
Distorted Brain Functioning	24	6.2
Erectile Dysfunction/Sleep Disorder	34	8.9
Insects Crawling under the Skin	36	9.4
Anemia, and Scratchy Eyes	31	8.1
Lungs, Kidney, Dry Mouth, & Throat Infections	18	4.7
High Blood Pressure, Stroke, Heart Disease, Musculoskeletal, Neurological, Liver Cirrhosis, and Respiratory Disease	37	9.6
Hepatitis B and C Infection/HIV/AIDS	11	2.9
Total	**384**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 above showed the distribution of respondents on the devastating health effects suffered by youths of Onitsha metropolis due to their indulgence in

substance/drugs abuse. Results revealed that less than half of the entire respondents (98 persons or 25.5 percent) reported loss of weight, fatigue and decreased appetite as the health challenges they experienced due to their involvement in substance/drugs misuse, 53 (13.8 percent) of the respondents indicated suffering from mild paranoia, physical exhaustion, and mental confusion due to their substance/drug abuse; 42 of the respondents constituting 10.9 percent stressed that they witnessed nervousness, irritability, and restlessness in the course of their involvement in substance/drugs misuse; 24 (6.2 percent) of the entire respondents averred that they suffered distorted brain functioning as a result of substance/drugs abuse; 34 (8.9 percent) of the respondents posited that they had erectile dysfunction as well as sleep disorder (insomnia) as a consequence of their substance/drug abuse.

Furthermore, 36 (9.4 percent) of the respondents expressed the feeling of insects crawling under their skins as a result of their involvement in substance/drug abuse; 31 (8.1 percent) of the respondents reported having anaemia and scratchy eyes due to drug abuse; 18 (4.7 percent) stressed that they suffered lungs, kidney, dry mouth, and throat infection due to their drug abuse; 37 of the entire respondents representing 9.6 percent posited experiencing high blood pressure, stroke, heart diseases, musculoskeletal, neurological, and respiratory issues as a result of their drug abuse behavior, while the remaining respondents (11 persons or 2.9 percent) indicated that they contracted Hepatitis B and C and HIV/AIDS due to their acts of substance/drug abuse. The findings above imply that most of Onitsha youths who engage in substance/drug abuse suffered several devastating health consequences which left them and their families and the larger society grappling with the concomitant outcome of their drug abuse behavior.

Discussion of Findings

This study set out to, first, investigate the drugs that are commonly abused by Onitsha youths, second, to find out the influencing factors of drug abuse among Onitsha youths, third, identify the sources of the commonly abused drugs by the respondents', and fourth, ascertain the devastating health effect of drug abuse among Onitsha youths. As regards the commonly abused drugs by Onitsha youths, 30.9 percent of the respondents indicated that Cannabis (Marijuana) was the most abused substance/drugs by youths of Onitsha metropolis, Alcohol consumption (17.2 percent) among Onitsha youths ranked the second most abused; 9.4 percent of the respondents indicated abusing Crystal Methamphetamine (NkpuruMmiri); 8.1 percent of the respondents reported abusing syrups, especially Codeine and Tramadol; 7.3 percent abused Amphetamine ; 5.7 percent of them abused Shisha mix; 4.2 percent abused Diazepam; 3.6 percent engaged in the abuse of Methadone/Morphine; 3.4 percent of the respondents engaged in Cocaine intake, and another 3.4 percent

abused Sedatives (Barbiturate). This finding supports the one provided by Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2010; Wickwire, Whelan, Meyers, & McCausland, 2008; Aka and Akunyili, 2003, who in separate studies found and identified dangerous drugs like cocaine, Indian hemp (marijuana), morphine, heroin, tobacco, ephedrine, valium five, and Chinese capsules as some of the drugs commonly abused by youths.

With reference to the influencing factors of drug abuse among Onitsha youths, this study found out that most of the youths (30.9 percent) abused drugs due to peer group pressure; 11.7 percent of the youths were involved in drug abuse due to curiosity; some indulged in drug abuse so as to belong to the big boys and girls class (Clique); some engaged in it due to the availability and easy accessibility of the drugs around and within Onitsha metropolis; a few others abused drugs to stimulate and enhance their sexual performance whenever their partners came visiting; other youths opined that their indulgence in substance abuse was due to the environment they resided in. There were youths who took illicit drugs to stay or keep alert all day while hustling for their daily bread; some other youths abused drugs due to the socioeconomic status of their parents; others to relax and relieve stress while the remaining respondents attributed their drug abuse to the fact that most members of their families also engaged in the practice. These findings corroborate the result of the study carried out by Osonwa & Arikpo, 2018; Ibrahim, Amit, Din, & Ong, 2017; Alexander, 2016; Stillerman, 2015; Njagi, 2015; Richter, Frey, Rohr, Roberts, Koberer, Fuchs, & Brinkmann, 2015; Udama, 2013; Dikku, 2012; Dankani, 2012; Simons-Morton &Tilda, 2010; Al-haqwi, 2010. They variously found in their studies that different factors accounted for youths' drug abuse and involvement.

On the sources of the substances/drugs commonly abused by Onitsha youths, this study discovered that most of the youths, a little less than half of the entire respondents' representing 31.5 percent averred that they usually got the substances/drugs they abused from pharmacies/patent medicine shops spread across the area of study, 20.5 percent of the respondents indicated they got the drugs from open drugs markets; 72 (18.8 percent) of them stressed that they got drugs/substances from their fellow drug abusers and friends while others got them from online drug rings, drug peddlers/pushers, dispensaries/hospitals and drug hawkers spread within and around the streets of Onitsha metropolis. This finding corroborates the study carried out by Abubakar, Abubakar, Kabir, Zayyanu, Garba, Isa, Wada, & Mohammed, 2021; Edafiadhe, 2005; Ju & Odejide, 1993; Akpala & Bolaji, 1991. On the burden of drug abuse in Nigeria, review of epidemiological studies showed that youths who abused drugs usually obtained these drugs from online drug rings, pharmacies/patent medicine shops, open drug markets, drug hawkers, fellow drug abusers,

friends, and drug pushers, among others.

Lastly, regarding the possible devastating health consequences of substance/drugs abuse on Onitsha youths, it was discovered that most (25.5 percent) of the youths reported loss of weight, fatigue and decreased appetite, another (13.8 percent) suffered from mild paranoia, physical exhaustion, and mental confusion due to their substance/drug abuse; 10.9 percent stressed that they witnessed nervousness, irritability, and restlessness; 6.2 percent of them experiennced distorted brain functioning; 8.9 percent of the respondents had erectile dysfunction and sleep disorder (insomnia). These findings corroborate those of Shehu & Rao, 2020; Cicchetti & Handley, 2019; Freeman, van der Pol, Kuijpers, Wisselink, Das, Rigter, & Lynskey, 2018; Njoku, Harvey, & Jason, 2017; Argyropoulos & Nutt, 2013; United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2010; Al-Haqwi, 2010; Rice & Dolgin, 2008; Copper, DeBon, Haddock, Esquivel, Klesges, Lando, & Talcott, 2008;Carson, Sullivan, Cochran, & Lersch, 2008; Craig, & Baucum, 2001). Scholars variously found that cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, amphetamine and other substances/drugs are dangerous substances that cause paralysis, cardiac attack, and death. Furthermore, they can cause damage to the brain and affect both dopamine and serotonin systems. They can also trigger euphoria, a high, but not a rush, wakefulness and insomnia, decreased appetite, irritability, aggression, anxiety, nervousness, convulsion and heart attack.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated substance/drugs abuse and its devastating health effect on youths of Onitsha metropolis, Anambra State, Nigeria. Results of the findings show that most of the respondents were gravely/seriously into the abuse of variety of drug types in the study area. The abuse of drugs by Onitsha youths is a major social and serious public health issue engendered by multifaceted factors that influenced youth drugs abuse, ranging from peer group pressure, curiosity, environmental influence to parental negligence.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: Firstly, there should be collaboration among strategic agencies (Nigeria Custom Services, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and NAFDAC) responsible for importation and regulation of controlled medicines to enable them monitor and/or prevent the use of illicit drugs through heightened regulatory alertness. Secondly, the Federal Ministry of Health should develop National Prescription Policy as well as ensure that strict enforcement of the prescription policy by the Federal Ministry of Health is thoroughly followed to the end. Thirdly, there should be a thorough advocacy and public awareness campaign through the print, social and electronic media as well as the Ministry of Information and agencies directly responsible for the wellbeing of the end

users and consumers, such as the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN), Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), NAFDAC, Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN). Additional funding to the relevant agencies should be provided by the government. Fourthly, there should be stricter issuance of permits and registration of controlled medicines by NAFDAC via greater collaboration through use of task forces among regulatory bodies responsible for drugs and controlled substances – NDLEA, NAFDAC and PCN – as well as extra-territorial enforcement to identify, disrupt and dismantle organized criminal groups operating across borders. Lastly, there is need to review our drug laws to enable the judiciary issue tougher penalties to those found guilty of involvement in drugs and substances abuse.

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Drama and Politics in Nigeria: A Study of Chidubem Iweka's *August Inmates* and Chukwuma Anyanwu's *Another Weekend Gone*

Bryan Jachukwuike Udeh and Lena O. Igwenagum

Abstract

Literature has always mirrored life and its facets. Literature strives to reconcile societal problems, including ethnic and cultural conflicts, injustice, inequality, corruption, class struggle, moral decadence, political disillusionment, eating propensity, marginalization and inequity in any given society. The literature found in Nigeria is strongly rooted in the economic and socio-political whimsies of the Nigerian society. The Nigerian writer strives to be relevant to the society of his time. Through literary writings, the playwrights under study seek avenues to bring about peaceful initiatives in their environment. The writer stands as a peacemaker, an observer and an admonisher. In this course of advocating for peaceful initiatives and good social reforms, the writer should be able to divorce all sentiments and emotional attachments from his writings. Chidubem Iweka's *August Inmates* and Chukwuma Anyanwu's *Another Weekend Gone* appear to be literary works of art that have their focus on peaceful resolution, corruption, class struggle, moral decadence, political disillusionment, and eating propensity in the Nigerian society. The critical theory employed in this research is sociological criticism. Through dramatic prowess and use of assertive characters, these playwrights have strived to show that in aligning drama with politics, the predominant socio-political problems of the country are brought to light and possible solutions proffered. The paper indicates the average Nigerian playwright's interest in advocating for peace and positive transformation of his contemporary society.

Keywords: literature, drama, Nigerian playwright, political disillusionment

Introduction

Literature is an imaginative work of art through which writers and creative artists reflect their societies. According to Maduakor, literature is a means of understanding and interpreting human beings and aspects of the society such as politics, religion, economics, social conflict, class struggle and human conditions through the medium of language (43). Literature reflects man and his society. Literature addresses social, political and economic issues found in a given society. Robert Diyanni rightfully opined that 'Drama is a mimetic art, one that imitates or represents human life and experiences'. For Martin Esslin,

in *Anatomy of Drama*, drama is the most concrete form in which art can recreate human situations and relationships (57).

Every literature of a given society is rooted in the social, political and economic vagaries of the society where it emanates from. Just like every other literature, Nigerian literature results from social, economic and political events in Nigeria. This paper looks into socio-political vagaries and events which have so far plagued the Nigerian society. These societal issues include corruption, class struggle, cultural conflict, moral decadence, injustice, inequality, eating propensity, marginalization, political disillusionment, and nepotism.

According to Chuma-Udeh, Nigerian literature is the aggregative experiences of the Nigerian society in its entirety as perceived by the Nigerian writers of different epochs (6). Chuma-Udeh, in *Trends and Issues in Nigerian Literature*, states that the type of literature found in Nigeria consists of specifically literature that portrays the typical Nigerian outlook (5). The author is of a firm belief that Nigerian literature has been greatly influenced by the tidal sequence of events which have pervaded contemporary Nigerian society (6). The essence of Nigerian writers remains their responsibility of voicing out the societal concerns of their society. Emenyonu therefore projects that the writer is the mouthpiece of his people; he speaks out the mind and concern of his people (43).

According to Nnolim, every generation of writers confronts the burning issues in their society and wrestles them through writing (10). These writers reflect their milieu by writing about happenings in their immediate contemporary society. According to Ngugi Wa Thiongo, a writer's work must reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in his society (2). Through the writings of these playwrights, they have endeavoured to criticize, extol, satirize, admonish, and reconcile societal issues which have posed as burdens to the nation.

Aspects of nepotism and dramatic illustrations of societal problems in Chidubem Iweka's *August Inmates*.

Chidudem Iweka's *August Inmates* is a typical Nigerian contemporary drama which has endeavoured to reconcile societal problems in Nigeria. The hallmark of this literary work of art lies in the ability of the playwright to create fictional characters and to assign specific roles to them. These characters in one way or the other have come in contact with the social, economic and political issues found in the Nigerian society.

The characters portrayed in the play are high-profile individuals in the society, ranging from politicians, federal civil servants to notorious criminals and journalists. These characters are Chief V.I.P Okoli, the federal minister for

trade and finance, who is believed to wield more political power than the president; Adebayo, the Inspector General of Police; and Alhaji Gambo, the federal minister of petroleum exports. Archie Kane is identified as a notorious arms dealer who supplies ammunitions to many third world nations. Ojemba Nutbari is known as a convicted armed robber. Obi Okoli is presented as a clever, honest and learned journalist. The presence of the prison guards help to confine and checkmate these characters, who were gathered from different walks of life to a particular place. The society is an important feature in the setting of a work of art because it is within it that interactions between different individuals take place.

The playwright presented us with a scenario where all the characters were detained in one place. The situation in which these characters in the play found themselves became a platform for discussing the various issues confronting the Nigerian society.

Chidubem Iweka used straight and simple English language to portray the high level of crime and nepotism committed by well-paid federal government officials in the country. Through the eyes of his characters, he gave us a proper insight of the economic situation found in most African continents today. Through their conversations we are led into the heart of the Nigerian society and also shown the extent to which the societal problems have eaten deep into the fabric of the nation. Contemporary Nigerian society has been marred as a result of negligence and lack of peaceful initiatives.

Chidubem Iweka is a Nigerian playwright who has deliberately endeavoured to advocate for peaceful initiatives and positive socio-political reforms of the Nigerian society through his literary outputs. The ability of this playwright to swim in the tide of social criticism enables him to communicate meaningful messages to his readers. He is aware of the role of the Nigerian writer as an instrument for provoking positive structures and transformation in his given society. Here, the playwright delves deeply into the social and economic issues of the Nigerian society and strives to address them. He presents assertive characters who understand the norm of their society. Through their discussions within the confinement where they were kept, they were able to address some of the societal problems in the country. Below is an excerpt taken from the play:

> Scene one opens in a VIP detention room after an apparent coup d' etat in an African country.
>
> The detainees are unaware of who their captors are. A general tension exists among them as they await the final word. There are six cushioned, easy chairs and a table in the room. CHIEF OKOLI is seated in the centre, flanked by the inspector General of police ADEBAYO and ALHAJI GAMBO (7).

OKOLI: Adebayo ! I don't care how you do it but you must get word out to my family at once. No matter the cost.These guards are human beings and must need money.

Adebayo: Money is not the problem, Chief, these men are under strict orders not to help us communicate with the outside world and anyone of them caught helping us knows he's a dead man.

Okoli: Don't tell me that! As the Inspector General of police, you know how to negotiate with such men!

Adebayo: Talk to whom? Chief I don't even know who is who or what exactly is going on. And don't forget, I am no more the Inspector General. (6)

From all ramifications, one will see the extent to which corruption, bribery and nepotism have marred the social structures in the various in the country. Through the interactions of the characters in the play, the dramatist showed the level of economic decay that was prevalent in the Nigerian society.

Moreso, this paper projects drama as a framework for a discursive understanding and analysis of the Nigerian society and its history as well as its contemporary woes. Through the lenses of the playwright under study, we see his effort in bringing to light the problems that have maligned a society of people bedeviled with many social issues.

However, in line with the symbiotic relationship that exists between the playwright and his contemporary society, Iweka uses his drama to draw attention to the impoverished, oppressed, exploited state of his class-conscious society in a bid to proffer an alternative vision and advocate for proper political redirection. The dramatic presentations of the playwright under study raise a number of political questions provoked by the multitude of socio-economic challenges that give a clear insight into the intrigues surrounding the Nigerian society**.**

Iweka, through the actions of his characters, has portrayed the socio-political problems associated with allocation of public revenue, a matter reserved for the ruling and upper class in Nigeria. He is unhappy about the physical decimation of the average person in Nigeria. He is also bothered about the spiritual and physical repression of people in the lower class; he feels sorely the denigration of his people and the nonchalant attitude of the government. This playwright is saddened by issues bothering on injustice, corruption and the segregation of his people. The playwright projects the fate of his downtrodden and deprived people ravaged by poverty and subjugated by the authorities. Through dramatic presentations, attention to the inhuman treatment meted to the average Nigerian person as result of class-conscious oppression and marginalization has been portrayed. The Nigerian people suffer from the trauma of socio-economic devastation and bad governance even as the Nigerian military dictatorship and

their civilian allies connive with multinational companies to drain the proceeds from the nation's oil resources. The Nigerian playwright wears the scorching cloak of his traumatized people.

The playwright writes as the mouthpiece of his people and has described their sorrowful experiences, the wicked exploitation of their human and natural resources, as a "multi-tragedy". The play lays bare the pathetic destruction of the social structures in the country by the insatiable political and elite class. The Nigerian playwright is full of loathing for the conspiracy of the government and its allies in the vicious destruction of the country.

For Iweka, introducing dramatic representation in politics is a kind of public duty which he owes to the Nigerian people in order to expose, reconstruct, and publicise their political disenchantment. The core essence of this research is to prove that the playwrights under study reflect the realities of political disillusionment in Nigeria and, as such, have become formidable and reliable voice in Nigerian literature. The Nigerian playwright under study has endeavoured to use drama as vehicle for political mediation and social control. This paper projects the infinite power of the Nigerian playwright as an agitator, and a promoter of positive events. This research strives to attend to the socio-political inclinations of the society in which the playwright found himself seeking for political re-direction.

Aspects of nepotism and dramatic illustrations of societal problems in Chukwuma Anyanwu's *Another Weekend Gone.*

This paper has endeavored to prove that the playwrights under study are concerned about socio-economic and political problems of the country. Nigeria's socio-political experiences are depicted through the two dramatic texts being reviewed here, as we can see in the following dialogue taken from Anyanwu's *Another Weekend Gone*:

> 2ND Prisoner: That is the issue! We shouldn't be paying for our rights! Look at the young man they killed the other day-
>
> 1ST Prisoner: Yes? What about him?
>
> 2ND Prisoner: They murdered the young man and to cover up for their wickedness, what did they do? They converted his paltry three months sentence to a death sentence! We should protest!
>
> 3RD Prisoner: To what end? You protested out there and got landed here. Where do think a protest here will land you?
>
> 2nd Prisoner: It doesn't matter.
>
> 3RD Prisoner: Oh yes, it matters here, the rule, if there is one, is to survive and self-preservation is the law. The government in the country is pathetic and

irresponsible despite abundance of resources. Unemployment, bribery, corruption, ethnic crisis, marginalization, oppression, lack of basic amenities becomes the order of the day (27).

Anyanwu uses his play to highlight the oppression and deprivation under which the common people live, thereby making a case for a change in the manner in which the country is governed and for the enthronement of an accountable, people-oriented political system. With a systematic use of language laced in Chaucerian bluntness, the playwright relieves a gruesome experience that has marred the good fabrics of the Nigerian society.

This research has critically re-examined and analysed the socio-political and economic perspectives found in Chukwuma Anyanwu's *Another Weekend Gone* through the dramatic representations and dramatic lenses of the playwright. The study has looked more into the dramatic illustrations of the nation's socio-political vagaries and strategies which the playwright employed in order to actualise a basic societal commitment and awareness.

The paper presents drama as a medium for political intercession and social control. The task in this paper is an exploration of the playwright's use of language to expose the socio-cultural and political dilemma of Nigeria. Some regions in Nigeria suffer great social deprivation, political marginalization and economic alienation in spite of its abundant natural resources. The problem of Nigeria is further complicated by an instituted economic conspiracy of the moribund Nigerian civilian politicians, top government officials and other various exploitative structures. The Nigerian playwright is saddled with the task of practically assessing the contemporary situation in society with the mind of identifying and proffering solutions to the different prevailing contradictions.

Anyanwu, like Iweka, uses drama as a vehicle for political mediation and social control. The concern of this paper is to explore how the average Nigerian playwright uses art (drama) to represent and reflect the socio-economic and socio-political tides of Nigeria. The playwright under study sees drama as a potent instrument which can be used to expose the dilemma of the Nigerian contemporary society. It is undisputable to say that the minority ethnic groups suffer great deprivation, political marginalization and economic alienation. Very importantly, the landscape itself is reduced to a land receded by her citizens in spite of its abundant natural resources. The problem of Nigeria is further complicated by an instituted economic conspiracy entrenched by Nigerian military regimes and various civilian governments. It is very pathetic and very dehumanizing that the political structure expected to pursue and defend the cause of its subjects is responsible for their frustration and affliction.

From a dramatic perspective, this paper has critically examined the irresponsible Nigerian governments and their negative contributions to nation building. The Nigerian playwright has pointed out without reservations the degradation, infringement on minority rights, and the politics of nepotism practised by the government against minority groups.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that the quest for peaceful initiatives should always be the watchword of the average Nigerian writer. The sources of the societal problems which have bedevilled Nigeria should be located and dealt with to avoid further destruction of the social structures of the country. The Nigerian playwright is a developer of alternative rules and procedures as well as avenues through which positive transformations can be engineered.

The Nigerian playwrights under study are of a firm belief that the ideology of portraying and presenting political, social and economic issues in the country has become a paramount issue. The force of their literary values becomes charged with a portrayal of the tension and intensity of the predominant issues found in their contemporary society. Therefore their writings turn out to be a means to a peaceful resolution and good social reforms in their contemporary society. Moreover, as a result of the influence of the issues prevalent in the Nigerian contemporary society, some Nigerian writers consider it necessary to use their art to focus on aspects of the sad realities that touch the core of the people's existence as they represent, through their works, the socio-political issues of the Nigerian society.

The two playwrights whose works we have reviewed have, through their literary prowess and dramatic presentations, advocated for peaceful initiatives and good social reforms in their society. This researcher strongly believes that Nigerian writers whose themes are basically centered on peaceful resolution and reconstruction of the country's social structures will definitely make a positive impact on our political leaders. This is why this paper has portrayed the Nigerian playwright as an engineer trying to create a railway passage for peace and positive transformations.

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