

SCOPING STUDY ON *OGBO-OGWU* MARKET, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA: A POST-COVID ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Historically, Igboland is famous for its markets. The significance of the market days (Eke, Afor, Nkwo and Orie) is widely covered in various literatures. The significance and entrepreneurial spirit for markets and economic activities are well documented and extend beyond the past into the development of contemporary markets across Nigeria led by Igbo entrepreneurs and “industrialists.” This study examines one such market in Southeastern Nigeria (i.e. the Ogbo-Ogwu -pharmaceutical market- in Onitsha, Anambra state) by scoping the growth of this market historically and relating it towards its challenges. The aim of this study is to situate the economic development and contribution of this market before and during the period of the global pandemic (COVID-19) within the context of larger economic development in terms of revenue generation and medicine manufacturing standards in Onitsha market -one of the largest markets in West Africa. Utilising a process tracing methodology triangulated with key informant interviews with pharmaceutical entrepreneurs in Ogbo-Ogwu, the study concludes that despite the global pandemic and challenges of maintaining expected health regulations/standards, Ogbo-Ogwu stands as a representation of the kindred spirit of the Igbo towards contributing to health and economic development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Anambra, Post COVID-19, Ogbo-Ogwu, Onitsha, Market, Economic Analysis

Introduction

Several markets are recognised nationally and internationally, which attract buyers and sellers of different products to do business therein. Examples of such markets in other parts of the world include the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, Turkey; the Pike Place Market in Seattle, Washington; Central Market in Athens, Greece; and Queen Victoria Market in

Melbourne, Australia. In Nigeria particularly, some major markets which hold similar economic and heritage importance include, *Balogun* market in Lagos, which is known for its wide variety of fashion items; Computer Village in Lagos, dedicated to the sales of electronics and computer accessories; Ibadan central market in Oyo, which sells everything from fruits and vegetables to textiles and livestock; *Ariaria* international market in Aba, known for its textiles and tailoring services. *Bodija* international market in Ibadan, which has a wide variety of products, including food, clothing and electronics goods, *Sabo* international market in Kano, which is known for its textile Industry as well as its trade in food and other goods and Onitsha main market on the banks of river Niger. Onitsha main market is known as one of the largest markets in West Africa and a major hub for the sales of a wide range of products, including textiles, food, electronics and drugs. The growth and development of this market (and its environs) represent a pull factor for migration and urbanisation of the city and Anambra State (See. Obi-Ani and Isiani, 2020). This Onitsha Main Market is often taunted as a place for everything, including gold, clothes, and cocoa, as these goods are bought and sold widely domestically and internationally. The market is a major commercial hub that plays a significant role in the region's economic activities as it is divided into different sections and zones, each specializing in specific goods. Like most markets, commodities are classified into segments depending on the goods, products or services type. It has numerous stalls, shops, and opens spaces where traders display their merchandise. The market offers a wide range of products, including food items, clothing, electronics, and household goods, building materials, automobiles, spare parts, cosmetics, fabrics and much more. The market has different sections and zones, including the head bridge market, the textile market, the building material market, the electronics village, the new auto spare parts market, and so on. Thus, in this market, there is the pharmaceutical section called *Ogbo-Ogwu* (place of medicine).

Ogbo-Ogwu has garnered a lot of attention over the years in scholarly literature. This may be a result of the issues surrounding fake and counterfeit drugs and their related organisational issues. It is hardly surprising that sociologists, human rights activists, journalists, and freelance writers have written copiously on the subject. However, historians and development studies scholars have given limited attention to this major area of Anambra market. While most of the historians' literature available on the subject has taken to issues around the internal leadership crisis (in the Onitsha Headbridge market), others have taken a microbic look at some salient issues related to drug production in Nigeria and how these fits into larger debates but without mentioning *Ogbo-Ogwu*.

Okeke, *et al* (2006) did an in-depth study of patent medicine sellers' perspectives on malaria in a rural Nigerian community. The study aimed to determine the medicine sellers' perspectives on malaria and the determinants that underlie their dispensing patterns of Anti malaria drugs. The study was conducted in *Ugwugo-Nike*, a rural community in south-east Nigeria. It involved in-depth interviews with 13 patent medicine sellers. The results show the same larger issues often associated with *Ogbo-Ogwu*; that a majority of the medicine sellers were not trained health professionals, and malaria is recognised as a major health problem by them. Usar (2014) did an economic analysis of the retail pharmaceutical market in Nigeria: towards access expansion and policy. The study undertook to understand market relationships in a rural retail drug market in the light of the structure-conduct-performance paradigm and isolate opportunities for potential policy interventions for improved access to quality and safer medicines. Key state and national drug regulatory officials were also interviewed, and related documentary data was collected and evaluated. The study recommended that to attain the desirable public health objective of sustained improvement in the quality of products and services obtainable at patent medicine vendor outlets, regulatory strategies must be contextually relevant, providers must be trained and offered financial and business incentives, and consumers must be empowered by accessible and timely health information for informed choices against the backdrop of strengthened and better-incentivized inspectorate unit in a systematically intertwined approach.

Concerns with substandard and counterfeit medicines (SCMs) have taken center stage across most literature covering pharmaceutical markets in Nigeria (including *Ogbo-Ogwu*). Okereke *et al.* (2021) considered this from the perspective of leveraging professional bodies and associations like industrial pharmacists in key places like *Ogbo-Ogwu* to combat the production and circulation of SCMs in the Nigerian drug market. These scholars are of the opinion that such bodies can ensure their effective containment. The current situation has been exacerbated due to factors tied to unregulated open drug markets, lack of counterfeit detection technology, poor local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity, and porous cross-border monitoring and surveillance systems. However, industrial pharmacists have a key role to play in combating the production and circulation of SCMs in the Nigerian drug market.

Drug market research in Nigeria is organized and conducted to gather information about specific target markets or customers. However, the most recent literature on the drug market (specifically, *Ogbo-Ogwu*) has recognized the tremendous performance of these markets but has not linked these markets to economic growth and development, thereby creating a research gap in this area. Moreover, despite production regulations and

enforcement by government agencies, considering the effects of the pandemic (i.e. COVID-19) towards disrupting the value chain and revenue generation potentials of these markets, has received little attention. This study therefore fills such gap by giving further explanations and analysis of the growth and contribution of the *Ogbo-Ogwu* to Onitsha. This study is thus poised to situate the economic development and contribution of *Ogbo-Ogwu* before and during the global pandemic (COVID-19) within the context of larger economic development in terms of revenue generation and medicine manufacturing standards in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study covers a nuanced understanding of factors contributing to Ogbo-Ogwu's growth and examines the roles of regulatory agencies attending to challenges of counterfeiting and other challenges, while highlighting potential for further growth.

Methodology

This study employs a process tracing approach to investigate the economic development and contribution of *Ogbo-Ogwu* in Onitsha, Anambra State, particularly before and during the global COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to situate its significance within the broader context of revenue generation and medicine manufacturing standards in the region. Adopting a qualitative research design with a longitudinal perspective, primary data is collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders such as drug market traders, local authorities, healthcare professionals, and government officials, supplemented by participant observation and secondary data from government reports, market surveys, economic statistics, and academic literature. Process tracing involves the systematic reconstruction of causal mechanisms and pathways (Collier, 2011) through which economic development occurs within the market, tracing key events, decisions, and interactions over time. Qualitative analysis, including thematic analysis and data triangulation, is employed to identify patterns and narratives in the collected data. Limitations to this study and methodology include context specificity and potential biases both from the interviewees and government reports this might over-sensationalize secondary information to attract further investments into the pharmaceutical sector.

The Growth and Development of 'Head Bridge' Market and *Ogbo-Ogwu* Section

The Head Bridge market is located close to the Niger River Bridge in Onitsha, Anambra State. The bridge, also known as the Onitsha Bridge, connects the South Eastern Nigeria with the South-South and South Western parts of the country over the Niger River. Between 1964 and 1965, French construction giant, *Dumez* constructed the Niger Bridge linking Onitsha and Asaba at an estimated cost of €6.75million. Construction of the

bridge was completed in December 1965 and was commissioned by the then Prime Minister of Nigeria, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa.

Fieldwork and interviews indicate that the Head Bridge market began around 1974 when the traders in the main market Onitsha saw the need to expand their business as there was an expansion of various markets that increased sales. This brought about many people to Onitsha for commercial activities. Onitsha became renowned with interest registered for trade, from countries like France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Malaysia etc. These countries exported their manufactured goods into Onitsha market. However, restrictions on non-British manufactured commodities in the main Onitsha market further improved the range of products sold in the then-fledgling market called the Head Bridge market. Such delineation also brought about the relocation of timber sellers to *Ogbo Osisi*, near the river Niger Bridge to ease off the congestion at the main market. This relocation also spurred the development of other sections like *Ogbo-Ogwu* (pharmaceutical section). *Ogbo-Ogwu* also has a rich and complex origin, which can be traced back to the early 1900s when Onitsha began to emerge as a big and well-known trading center. At this time, local traders started importing basic medical supplies while exporting traditional herbal remedies to neighboring regions and countries like Cameroon and Gabon. In the mid-20th century, Onitsha experienced rapid economic growth due to its strategic location along the Niger River. This led to an increase in trade activities, including the importation of pharmaceutical products from Europe, Asia and other parts of Africa (Iwuzor, 2018).

As trade was expanding a group of enterprising individuals recognized the potential for profits in the pharmaceutical sector. These individuals became known as drug importers or wholesalers who would travel abroad to source various drugs and medical suppliers for sales in Onitsha. To streamline their operations and protect their interests, these drug importers formed associations such as the Onitsha Patent Medicine Dealers Association (OPMDA) and the Anambra State Patent Medicine Dealers Association (ASPMDA) (field interview). These associations played a crucial role in regulating drug imports, ensuring quality control and resolving disputes within the pharmaceutical sector. Nigeria entrepreneurs began establishing small scale pharmaceutical manufacturing units, with Onitsha market itself or nearby areas. This led to an increase in locally produced medicines that catered specifically to local needs. Over the last few decades, *Ogbo-Ogwu* in Onitsha market has continued to expand and modernize, it now boasts numerous shops, stores and warehouses (over 2000) dedicated to the sale of pharmaceutical products. It has become a one-stop destination for a wide range of medicines, equipment, and healthcare products. One of the primary goals for the establishment of *Ogbo-Ogwu* was to provide

easy access to genuine and quality pharmaceutical products for residents in Onitsha and the Southeast.

Ogbo-Ogwu was established in the Head Bridge market to contribute towards the development and production of medications in Nigeria. This market has been crucial towards ensuring the availability and accessibility of safe and effective drugs for patients both in Nigeria and the West African sub-region. Not known to many, *Ogbo-Ogwu* can be argued to encompass various aspects of pharmaceutical production, including research and development manufacturing, distribution and sales of pharmaceutical products (Field interview). It also involves a wide range of stakeholders, such as pharmaceutical companies, regulatory authorities, healthcare providers and patients who have come to utilize this market. *Ogbo-Ogwu* offers a wide range of products, including the prescription of drugs, over-the-counter medications, medical suppliers and health related products. Producers in this market also provide services such as consultation with pharmacists and basic health screening. To ensure the safety and quality of the products sold in *Ogbo-Ogwu*, strict regulations are enforced, as licensed pharmacies are required to operate within designated stalls or shops. Although many do question strategies for quality control and enforcement (See Iwuzor, 2018; Akinyandenu, 2013). The establishment of the pharmaceutical section has not only improved access to health care but has also created employment opportunities for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other support staff; it has also contributed to the growth of local businesses by attracting customers from neighbouring towns who come specifically for pharmaceutical needs.

Contemporary Economic Issues around the Growth of *Ogbo-Ogwu*

Ogbo-Ogwu market in Onitsha is highly competitive, with different companies selling a wide range of drugs. Some of the major players in the market are Natus Pharm Chemist, Ramsgate, Fidehil, Dolek Pharmaceutical, among others. These companies compete not only on price, but also on factors like quality, availability, and marketing. For example, companies often launch marketing campaigns to promote their products and win over customers. This intense competition drives down prices and increases the availability of drugs for consumers. Government regulation also play significant role in how these companies compete among themselves. While the Nigerian government regulates the pharmaceutical sector through the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), this agency enforces strict standards for the production, marketing, and sale of drugs in *Ogbo-Ogwu* and the country in general. These companies in *Ogbo-Ogwu* must get approval from NAFDAC before they can produce market and sell their products. By legal frameworks, NAFDAC is expected to conduct regular inspections

to ensure compliance of these companies in *Ogbo-Ogwu*, as this is important for ensuring the safety and quality of drugs sold in the market (Ugbegili, 2014).

Wholesalers and retailers play a vital role in *Ogbo-Ogwu*. These intermediaries buy drugs from manufacturers and then sell them to pharmacies, hospitals, and other end users. In some cases, wholesalers and retailers repackage or rebrand drugs to make them more appealing to consumers. They also play a significant role in brand advertising by educating consumers about the products and providing customer service. The strategy of these wholesalers and retailers further contributes to the variety of drugs available in the market. This is because Onitsha is a major hub for pharmaceuticals in Nigeria; some wholesalers rely on foreign deals to further import more drugs only to re-brand and re-sell them. Primary imported drugs from countries like India and China constitute a major part of *Ogbo-Ogwu* market import systems. Some of such drugs include over-the-counter medications, prescription medications, and traditional herbal medicines. However, *Ogbo-Ogwu* has grown and expanded rapidly in the last ten years. This growth is driven by several factors, including population growth, urbanization, and increased demand for healthcare services. The market is expanding into new areas, such as telemedicine and online pharmacies. And the emergence of new technologies is also driving innovation and growth in the market. The population growth in the cities of Onitsha and Asaba is a major factor in the contemporary growth of *Ogbo-Ogwu*. Such population growth comes with an attendant demand for healthcare services and pharmaceuticals. The population of these cities is estimated to be more than a million, and it is predicted to continue growing rapidly in the coming years. As the population grows, so does the demand for drugs to treat common illnesses like malaria, diabetes and hypertension. Urbanisation is also a key driver of growth, as more people move to the city from rural areas. The increased demand for quality healthcare services is also a factor driving the growth of *Ogbo-Ogwu*. The rising middle class in the city has led to a greater demand for modern, high-quality healthcare facilities and services. This has resulted in the growth of private hospitals and clinics and the expansion of government-run hospitals and clinics. Field interviews showed that the increased demand for quality healthcare has led to several changes in *Ogbo-Ogwu*. One of the most notable changes is the shift from traditional pharmacies to modern drug stores. Drug stores often directly associated with *Ogbo-Ogwu* offer a wider range of products, including over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and supplements. Using innovative means, they also offer more modern services, such as home delivery and online ordering. New technologies, such as e-prescriptions and electronic health records, are becoming more common among marketers in *Ogbo-Ogwu*. These technologies are improving the efficiency and accuracy of drug distribution and healthcare services supply chains. They are also helping to reduce the risk of errors and fraud. In addition, the use of

mobile technology is allowing patients to have more convenient access to healthcare information and services (Field Interview).

Economic Analysis of *Ogbo-Ogwu* Market and Post-COVID-19 Views

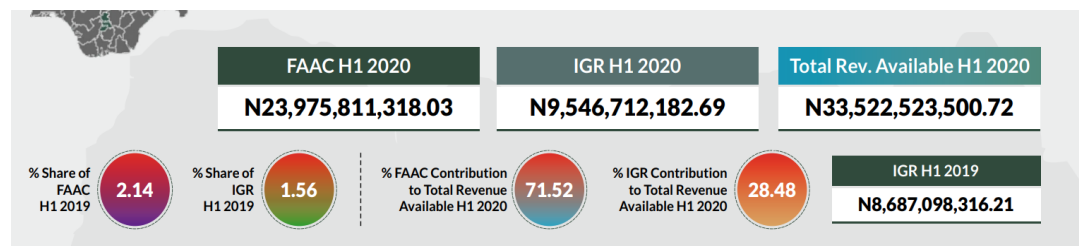
The impact and importance of *Ogbo-Ogwu* cannot be over-emphasized. It is a valuable institution for the urban and rural areas of Onitsha, Anambra State and Nigeria. *Ogbo-Ogwu* represents part of Nigeria's nascent pharmaceutical sector which contributes less than 0.8 percent to the GDP, while in countries like South Africa's pharmaceutical sector generated 8 billion USD in 2019 alone. Its patent drug market facilitates drug trade and has led to more production and employment, resulting in higher income streams both for the government (in terms of revenue generation) and domestic income. *Ogbo-Ogwu* is essential for developing drug industries in Nigeria as part of the over 200 manufacturing and packaging firms like those in Lagos and Kano, which primarily import over 90 per cent of medical inputs from India and China.

Ogbo-Ogwu contributes to the revenue generation in Onitsha market. The first instance is the taxes paid by pharmaceutical manufacturing and distribution companies directly to the Anambra State government on one hand and the registration/quality standards levy paid to the Federal Government *via* NAFDAC. In Onitsha, these companies are required to pay taxes on their profits and other taxes, such as property taxes, payroll taxes, and import duties paid to Federal customs agencies. These taxes provide a significant source of revenue for the local, state and federal governments. The most significant type of tax is the corporate income tax (which is among the highest in the country), which is levied on the profits of companies operating in *Ogbo-Ogwu* market. In addition, pharmaceutical companies are also required to pay a number of other taxes, such as excise duty which is directly tied to the production of medications in *Ogbo-Ogwu*. Companies in *Ogbo-Ogwu* also facilitate tax generation through value-added tax on the sale of its pharmaceutical products; it is a known fact that Onitsha is home to a number of pharmacies and retail outlets that sell pharmaceutical products. These sales generate revenue for both the businesses and the local government, through the taxes that are levied on these sales. The pharmaceutical sector employs a significant number of people in Onitsha, both directly and indirectly. Directly, the sector employs people in jobs such as, sales, marketing, research and development. Indirectly, the sector supports a range of other businesses, such as transport and logistics, warehousing, and packaging.

The *Ogbo-Ogwu* directly employs people in the healthcare, pharmaceutical, and related industries. This includes jobs in hospitals, clinics, pharmaceutical companies, and related businesses. In addition, there are indirect jobs created in other industries that support the pharmaceutical sector, such as transportation, logistics, and manufacturing. Overall, the

pharmaceutical sector is a major driver of job creation in the area. The jobs created by the pharmaceutical sector in Onitsha are not just in healthcare professions. For example, pharmaceutical companies require support staff such as accountants, marketing professionals, and HR professionals. In addition, hospitals and clinics require janitorial staff, cafeteria workers, and security guards. So, the jobs created by the pharmaceutical sector are diverse and have a ripple effect on the local economy. Field interview showed that, “people who work in the pharmaceutical sector earn an income that can be used to support their families and the local economy”. In addition, the income generated by the sector is taxed by the government, which helps to fund public services and infrastructure projects. So, the income generated by *Ogbo-Ogwu* has a significant impact on the local economy and benefits the Anambra state government. In Q1 and Q2 of 2020 alone, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Anambra generated over 9 billion NGN, with over 1.3 billion generated via taxation on industries such as the pharmaceutical sector like *Ogbo-Ogwu* (NBS, 2020).

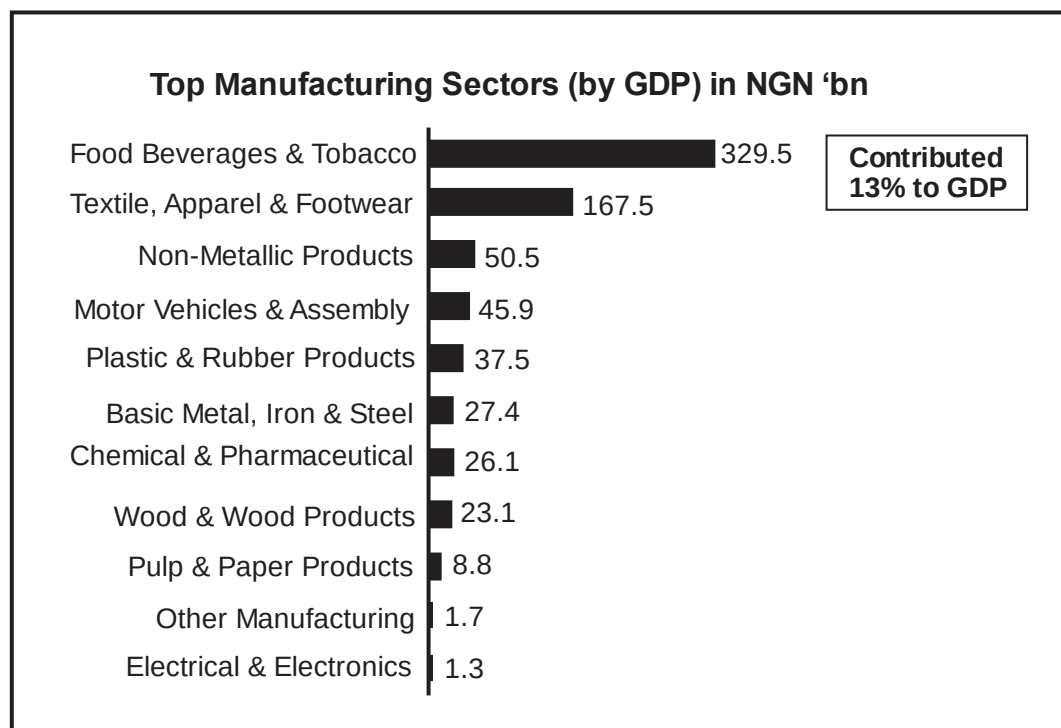
Figure 1: Anambra State: COVID-19 Internal Generated Revenue (First Half 2020)



Source: NBS, 2020

More so, the increased access to healthcare services and medicines has a direct impact on the health of individuals in the town. This improved health leads to increased productivity and economic activity, which further benefits the local economy. Additionally, improved health outcomes lead to a decrease in costs associated with treating diseases and chronic conditions. This further benefits the government and individuals in the state. In view of the economic importance of *Ogbo-Ogwu* and the pharmaceutical sector in Anambra State, the government, since the pandemic, has begun plans to improve existing infrastructure to aid drug manufacture and distribution in the state. The objective is to build a pharmaceutical industrial cluster (most likely close to *Ogbo-Ogwu*) with the goal of increasing the added value of this subsector to the economy of Anambra state. *Via* such initiatives, efforts to leverage the existing success of *Ogbo-Ogwu* towards improved job creation, export and the provision of quality medications for not only the people of Anambra, but for the entire country. This plan constitutes part of the Governor’s (Professor Charles Soludo) ‘made in Anambra’ export strategy with plans of improving

the 26.1 per cent contribution of pharmaceuticals and chemicals to the GDP of Anambra State (see Figure 2).



Source: *Made in Anambra Export Strategy, 2023*

Figure 2: Contribution of the Manufacturing Sector to Anambra State GDP (2023)

One specific example of the impact on health outcomes is the treatment of HIV/AIDS and the provision of mobilization of COVID-19 vaccines once they were available in Nigeria. The pharmaceutical sector has played a key role in providing access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) and other treatments for HIV/AIDS. This led to a decrease in the number of new infections and the mortality rate associated with the disease. Individuals living with HIV/AIDS are able to continue to work and support their families, further benefiting the economy. Malaria is a major health issue, mostly in densely populated towns (like Onitsha), and *Ogbo-Ogwu* has been instrumental in providing access to effective treatments, such as artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT). This has led to a decrease in the number of deaths due to malaria and an increase in the quality of life for those affected by the disease. *Ogbo-Ogwu* is developing new drugs and therapies and improving the quality of healthcare services provided by local hospitals and clinics. This is done through a number of initiatives, including supporting the training of healthcare professionals, the introduction of new technologies, and the improvement of

infrastructure. These initiatives aim to improve the quality of care and the population's overall health.

During COVID-19, links to the pandemic and the increased demand for pharmaceutical products existed. There was a significant increase in demand for pharmaceutical products, particularly those related to COVID-19 treatment and prevention. The uptake was also a result of attending to some of the misinformation and misconceptions about the pandemic and its attendant health challenges (Olu-Abiodun et al., 2022). This led to an increase in revenue and profits for some companies in the sector. However, it also led to some shortages of certain products, as supply (as production dropped significantly) could not keep up with the increased demand due to the pandemic lockdowns. As a result, many pharmaceutical companies had to invest in expanding their production capacity after the lockdown to meet the increased demand. One reason for the increased demand was the need for vaccines and therapeutics to treat and prevent COVID-19. The demand for these products was particularly high in Onitsha, as the city was one of the hardest hit by the pandemic and also, an intersection point for travels between the South-West, South-South and the South-East. In addition, the demand for other types of pharmaceutical products also increased, as people became more aware of the importance of maintaining good health. This led to an increase in demand for products such as vitamins, supplements, and over-the-counter medications.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions to the global supply chain, significantly impacting *Ogbo-Ogwu*. Many raw materials for production, such as active ingredients and packaging materials, were sourced from other countries (primarily China). Thus, with severe lockdowns in Asia, these companies in *Ogbo-Ogwu* found it difficult to operate. The disruptions to international trade caused by the pandemic made it difficult to obtain these materials, leading to shortages of finished products. In addition, the disruptions also led to increased costs for materials and transportation, further increasing the cost of doing business. More so, the cost of raw materials and transportation was not the only factor contributing to the increased cost of doing business. Many companies in *Ogbo-Ogwu* had to invest in additional safety measures, such as personal protective equipment and social distancing measures as mandated by the government, to protect their employees from COVID-19. Many of these companies in the market had to switch to remote working arrangements, which required additional investments in technology and infrastructure to enable such. All of these costs added up to make it more expensive to run a pharmaceutical business during the pandemic for most companies in *Ogbo-Ogwu* (Field Interview).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in *Ogbo-Ogwu*. This included the use of e-commerce platforms for ordering and distribution, as well as the use of digital tools for tracking and tracing shipments. The majority of these companies, who had initially out-sourced these aspects of their productive supply chain, began to make strategic investments into these areas. These technologies helped to reduce the impact of the supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic. They also helped to improve efficiency and reduce costs in the long term, making most of these businesses more economically viable. One of the most significant digital technologies that were adopted during the pandemic was *telemedicine*. This allowed patients to consult with healthcare professionals remotely, using video conferencing and other digital tools. This helped to reduce the risk of infection for both patients and healthcare workers, and it also made it easier for patients to access care, even in remote areas. Companies in *Ogbo-Ogwu*, during and after the pandemic, began to improve the architecture and investment in telemedicine and marketing. They began to adapt to the new normal through partnerships with doctors and pharmaceutical companies. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of health and safety for the pharmaceutical sector. This included not only the safety of workers and patients but also the safety of products. For example, pharmaceutical sectors had to invest in quality control and testing to ensure that their products were safe and effective. They also had to ensure that their supply chains were secure, to prevent the introduction of counterfeit or substandard products. Also, they had to adapt to new regulations and guidelines during the pandemic. This included new standards for product testing, as well as new requirements for the tracking and tracing of products. In addition, the sector had to comply with new rules for marketing and advertising and new regulations for the safe and secure handling of patient data. All of these new regulations added to the complexity of doing business in the sector, but they also helped to ensure the safety and quality of pharmaceutical products.

Conclusion

The pharmaceutical sector cannot survive in a country without an enabling environment. Strengthening the country's local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity will take decades of investment, dedication, advocacy, and coordinated efforts by the government and private stakeholders. To strengthen the Nigerian pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity, the government, regulators, policymakers, pharmaceutical companies, and other relevant stakeholders must address the political, socio-economic, financial, and regulatory barriers such as high taxes, high energy costs, poor infrastructure, insecurity, poor funding, and unfavourable policy changes.

Ogbo-Ogwu is a vibrant and important part of the region's economy. It contributes to job creation, economic development, and research and development. The advancements made by this sector have motivated the government of Anambra to consider improving pharmaceutical manufacturing contribution to the state's GDP, which currently stands at over 20 per cent. Although the pandemic disrupted supply chains and production lines, companies adopted innovative means and integrated advanced business models towards maintaining profitability levels. These strategies also included a strong focus on consumer protection and ensuring the quality and safety of products; while trying to adhere to national minimum standards for the production of medications. While the market still faces some challenges, it has a lot of potential for future growth and development. *Ogbo-Ogwu* looks bright, with many opportunities for innovation and growth like the Igbo entrepreneurial kindred spirit. The region has a talented workforce and a strong commitment to improving the health and well-being of the population. With continued investment in research and development, the sector can become a leading force in the global pharmaceutical industry.

Interviews* (Names of have been changed to ensure the confidentiality of interviewees)

Interview with Mr. James, 48 years old, Trader, Onitsha, June 2023.

Interview with Chief Chukwu, 67 years, Pharmacist, Onitsha, June 2023

Interview with Igwe, 58 years old, Businessman, Onitsha, August 2023.

Interview with Dr. Orakwu, 69 years old, Doctor, June Onitsha, 2023.

Interview with Arinze, 49 years old, Medical Practitioner, Onitsha, June 2023.

Interview with Dr. Charles, 51 years old, Doctor, Onitsha, August 2023.

Interview with Sunday Izunna, Businessman, 63 years old, Onitsha, August 2023.

Interview with Esther, 52 years old, Medical Practitioner, Onitsha, June 2023

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