

**STANDARD ORGANIZATION OF NIGERIA’S FIGHT AGAINST SUBSTANDARD GOODS
IMPACTED ON THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY**

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Abstract

Nigeria is bedeviled with the proliferation of illicit and substandard goods. There is a relative unchecked mechanism to fight the continuous influx of the goods in the Nigerian market which has to large extent affected the economy. In this situation, there is no doubt that there are no government institution thrust with the responsibility of ensuring that fake, illicit and substandard product have no place in the Nigerian market. As such, this study examines the challenges facing Standard Organization of Nigeria in their fight against the proliferation of substandard goods in the Nigerian economy. It utilized survey method of data collection where 625 questionnaire were distributed and 570 recovered with only 524 used for analysis. Thus, the study was analysed using SPSS statistical package. The study discovered that corruption has in several ways affected the efforts of Standard Organization of Nigeria in addressing the proliferation of substandard goods in Nigeria; impunity has negatively aided the proliferation of the Nigerian economy with substandard goods and Standard Organization of Nigeria’s fight against substandard goods has not meaningfully impacted on the Nigerian economy. Based on the above, the study recommended that Government should endeavour to improve the agency thrust with the responsibility of ensuring standard of consumable products through the provision of basic logistics, personnel and infrastructures needed to fight against wage war against the proliferation of the economy with substandard goods.

Keywords: Economy, Goods, Nigeria, SON and Substandard

Introduction

Nigeria is fast becoming a beehive and dump site for substandard goods (Udeme, 2017). This has thus, posed a great challenge to the government, regulatory institutions, consumers and the entire public. The global media is flooded with news of harmful and substandard products in Nigerian markets. This is a result of the threat posed by the influx, domestic production and circulation of substandard products. This accounts for uncountable deaths and monumental economic losses. Thus, consumers are compelled to patronize imported fairly used products. Such products have gained wider acceptability given their genuineness, originality and durability over new products.

Thus, substandard good or product means a product which fails to comply with an applicable consumer product safety rule which creates a substantial risk of injury to the public (Akanya, 2003.p1). Sequel to the above, W.H.O. (2023) described it from medical perspective that substandard also called “out of specification” are authorized medical products that fail to meet either their quality standards or specifications, or both. It means unregistered/unlicensed medical products that have not undergone evaluation and/or approval by the National or Regional Regulatory Authority for the market in which they are marketed/distributed or used, subject to permitted conditions under national or regional regulation and legislation. It also means falsified medical products that fraudulently misrepresent their identity, composition

or source. In sum, substandard and falsified products are often produced in very poor and unhygienic conditions by unqualified personnel, and contain unknown impurities and are sometimes contaminated with bacteria. The affect has so much on mankind that people lose their lives on regular basics due largely to the consumption of these toxic components. Some are produced in Nigeria while other are brought from outside. As such, the logic of this study sets to dissect the demands of the study that focuses on exploring the efforts and responsibilities of SON in fighting substandard products. Therefore, the focus of this study is to examine the challenges faced by Standard Organization of Nigeria in combating the proliferation of substandard goods in the Nigeria.

Literature Review

SON in the fight against substandard goods in Nigeria

Here, the study focussed on the nature of Nigerian economy which is invariably the Nigerian market to note how it fared as a result of the activities of substandard products peddlers. It also looked at the nature of the economy which has suffered over the years due largely to poor economic policies. To critically appreciate this stance, the nature of the Nigerian economy was explored from the development perspectives. As such, a look in to the Nigeria economy opens a vista of probe into the nature of development in the economy which can only be understood from socio-economic perspectives. On that note, economic development is an aspect of development that sees development from the impact of economic advancement. It is concerned with the relationship between social and economic factors within a given society. It believes that development is not comprehensive if it has not added any value to human needs. It does not agree totally with economic projections and statistical presentation of development without establishing how that has impacted well-being/welfare of man (Okafor, 2019). In this respect, the questions that will be asked while addressing economic issue on development are: What is the state of security? How is longevity state (maternal and morbidity rate) measured considering the unchecked influx of fake products in the market and what is the state of equality in distribution of common wealth? Therefore, it is germane to note that economic development is that aspect of economy that promotes social well-being of the citizenry through the process of economic advancement. It focuses on issues like health, education, employment, security, social infrastructure (pipe-borne water, roads, electricity, housing, etc.) (Seer in Okereke and Ekpe, 2002, p. 11). Naomi (1995) argues that economic development involves equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, provision of health care, education, housing and other social services with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life which in return help the development of the society. More so, Drewnowski (1966) coming from a socio-economic development perspective notes that the economy has to do with change in the quality of life and quantitative growth of various values. In respect to quality of life, it can be improved by addressing issues of conditions of health, nutrition, education, transport communication and so on. While economically, development is taken to mean the rise in per capita income or gross national products (GNP) or the general economic growth. Whereas Vinod and Desphande (2017) see socio-economic development as improvement in a state in which citizens are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, and political life whereby achievement of fundamental and human right is assured. Ake (2001) affirms that economic development is improvement in the distribution of common values (goods) which ensures equity and fairness with deliberate attempts to end poverty, hunger, illiteracy, diseases, corruption etc. Kande (2015) opines that the impacts of socio-economic development are seen in changes in laws, physical and ecological changes, human interactions, social stability and active participation in public activities. In this view, Gbosi (2001) reveals that it entails ability of any given economy to provide goods and services, increase its development and capacity and provide infrastructure development

For better appreciation of the economy, the concept development which it is anchored on need is to be reviewed and interrogated extensively. Development is one of the contentious issues in the field of social sciences especially political science. The meaning and application; and theory of the concept development has been controversial. According to Okereke and Ekpe (2012:1) “the term development as used in the contemporary social science literature is not only vague and nebulous but is also polemical”. To Meier (1989) it is difficult to advance one precise meaning for the term “development” and perhaps easier to say what development is not than what it is. Every school of thought ascribes meaning to it according to its conviction.

Also, a times some schools of thought blame the other as being responsible for state of development and underdevelopment obtained in each side of the divide. Major among these school of thoughts are liberal (modernization) and Marxist (dependency) schools of thought. Modernization school of thought stresses the internal mechanism of every society (political, religion and culture practices) as being responsible for their level of development. On the other hand, Dependency school seeks to evaluate external factors in defining development of nation-states especially Third World countries. Consequently, every theory, having identified driving factors, then proposes specific strategies which should be applied (Olson 1963; Parsons 1964) to achieve economic development. Modernization development theory, with a focus on culture, suggests internal cultural reforms or changes in social or political organizations as a starting process towards development for underdeveloped societies. The insinuation here is that internal factors are responsible for underdevelopment in the third world countries. Any effort to stimulate development must start with changing domestic practices. This reform must tow the pattern of developed western countries which the school argued to be model for development. Therefore, underdevelopment of the Third World countries by this school's argument is not as a result of Third World countries contact with western countries rather some practices by these countries that are antithetical to development or modernization. Modernization perspective to development of the third world also avers that these countries lack capacity to develop. It is incumbent on the developed west to help them to develop through foreign assistance (aid and grant), foreign loan, foreign direct investment, scholarship, military training, policy designs and other intervention and assistance.

In a different way, Dependency school argues that underdevelopment of the Third World countries is as a result of their linkage to external environment. In other words, for development to take place in the third world countries there must be external reformation policies that deal with relations between developed and developing countries (Cardoso and Faletto 1979; Szymanski 1982). Development should gear towards enhancing and advancing internal environment by solving internal problems using mostly internal resources. It is the belief of this school by this, that internal factors are not the problem of development in the Third World countries. Development has been a historical evolution both in theorization and experience. Man from cradle has been in a journey and in search of better life which development represents. Man engaged several approaches in pursuit of this. Some have materialized positively whereas some others have created devastating experiences.

Development to Liberal school of thought is associated with growth and changes in economic outlook therefore determined by the GNP (Gross National Products) as associated with capital accumulation and industrialization. In this instance development means a national economy whose initial economic condition has been more or less static to generate and sustained an annual increase in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rate of 5-7% or even more (Eghweree, 2015, Todaro and Smith, 2009). Kuznets (1973) argues that development required high rates of growth per capita Gross National Product (GNP) of population and of total factor of productivity (especially labour productivity). Many countries especially the developing countries have pursued this with vigour even to the extent of attaining the proscribed GNP point without any real development attained in respect to change in human life and value. There may be increase in number of cities, industries, institutions, and etc but the real essence of development which is ending poverty and enhancing human empowerment is not achieved. This is growth without development (Offiong, 2001). The real essence development encompasses more than the material and financial side of life. Hah (1970) asserts that we were taught to take care of our GNP as this will take care of our poverty, but reverse is the case, so let us take care of our poverty as this will take care of our GNP. Richard, and Ghazi, (1988) maintain there are a number of problems which one encounters while using per capita income as a measure of development and hence, though convenient, income is not a very satisfactory measure of development and at best it can be taken as one of the component or indicator of development. Income is not evenly distributed among the social class. Therefore, increase in GNP may not primarily mean development, because the assumed growth may end up in the hands of few economic and political elites without trickling down to general citizenry of such economy. Ingrid (2016) opined that for growth to be pro-poor and developmental, substantial parts of the investment generally need to be targeted to employment-generating sectors. It is unfortunate that all arguments, policies, assistances and loans borrowed for the purpose of development have not been able to

address development problems in Africa especially because poverty and people's need have not been focused on rather implementation of externally influenced policies that do not understand the real needs of the poor has been the focus. In other words, this means development occurs when there is general improvement and measurable change in the life of an individual, group or a nation. Eghweree (2015) further projects that development embraces whole gamut of processes that leads to the enhancement of the living standard of any society with a view to making it achieve acceptable minimum standard that is able to sustain life, guarantee equality and freedom needed for the good life.

Furthermore, development entails ability of a country to direct its affairs without external influence. When a country still depends squarely on the economic and political policies of other countries to survive such country's development is questionable, because it is bound to crumble any time such other countries are having socio-economic problems. Development includes ability to pilot your affairs without recourse to external dictates. Therefore, developed state should be able to take care of wellbeing of its people and relate equally and interdependently with other countries at global level. Amadou (2007) avers that no country is developed if it is unable to provide for itself and its population (self-sustenance), lacks self-worth/independence (self-esteem), and is encumbered by daily survival needs (un-free). In other words, development entails internal and external freedom from any force or factors that impinge human advancement and efforts to overcome nature. Okafor (2020) argues that the situation of the Nigerian economy on this not is pitiable because government is no longer interested in the provision rather, they take from the people. This explains why the rate of corruption in Nigeria is very high because resources meant for development and growing the economy have been diverted into private purses.

Odumodu (2013) noted that Nigeria is losing over 1 trillion naira annually to importation and domestic production of substandard items. This figure covers loss of expected tax revenue to government, income to local manufacturers employment generation and the losses incurred by consumers for purchasing non durable and substandard items. Consumer Protection Council (2012) remarked that about 1 million lives are lost annually in Nigeria following use and consumption of substandard items ranging from food, drinks, automobile and electrical parts to building materials. Odumodu (2012) and Akanya (2014) submitted that 85 percent of imported products in Nigeria are substandard. According to Odumodu (2012:17). There is virtually or hardly any product that is not either faked or its quality sub-standard when compared with the original. From the pharmaceutical to the textile, beverages, ceramics, electrical and electronics, building, book publishing, music and even Nigeria's fast rising home video industry. The oil boom in the early 1970s stimulated domestic production and facilitated massive importation of goods. Consequently, Federal Government of Nigeria in realization that most products possess some unobservable or intrinsic attributes which make consumers evaluation before purchase more difficult, established Standard Organization of Nigeria by Decree No. 56 of 1971. The organization has the responsibility for establishment and elaboration of standards for products processes.

Nevertheless, a times growth is mistaken to mean development. Growth and development are not the same. Though the growth of the economy is an integral part of development but, it is not whole encompassing enough to take place of development. In growth situation economic indices are high but do not reflect on the living condition of the citizens. Import-export volume is high, monetary circulation is high but the people are still groaning under poverty, illiteracy rate is still high, death rate is high likewise unemployment level. There is no participatory economic and political system (Nwagbo, 2021). Such a situation is artificial and superficial because it can crash at any point in time. It is usually externally controlled. Such development is simply called growth. It is not yet rooted. The citizens are not participating in it. Development must address needs of humanity within such political sphere before it can be taken to be development, global indices, statistics and rating notwithstanding. This is what many developing countries celebrate as development as a result of rating by some international agencies especially IMF attributing some statistical economic growth. Pitifully, this does not reflect on the living conditions of their citizenry. In this regard Ofiong (2001) argues that what we experience in African countries is growth without development. According to Onyimadu (2015)

economic growth is akin to increasing levels of productive activity and capacity but higher growth rates may not translate to economic development. Growth is usually annual evaluation of economic activity based on Gross National Product (GNP) (Ahgion and Howitt, 2006). The projection is that increase in GNP entails higher incomes, higher levels of employment, and lots of goods and services available for investment and consumption as a result of increase in production and cash flow which are major basis for its measurement. The obvious is that increase in GNP does not address poverty, hunger, unemployment, decay in the social infra-structure like hospital, education, social welfare etc. For instance, Onyimadu (2015) asserts that over the past two decades, the Nigerian economy has experienced consistent high growth rates of about 6% – 8% which has made it among the fastest growing countries in the world. But within the same period of Onyimadu's assertion, development both in physical infrastructure, institution building and human capital development have been on a serious decline resulting to so many internal crises in Nigeria. Literacy rate has been low, internal agitations and security challenges has been high, death rate and environmental pollution and degradation has been on the increase still Nigeria economy is rated one of the fastest developing economy. This can only be taken to be development when it has actually helped to improve living conditions and enduring capacity (empowerment) of the citizens. Economic growth advocacy is designed to promote capitalist economy and encouraging western economic models that a time do not understand and inculcate the environmental factors of developing economy. Experience has shown that once those western capitalist indices growth are attained; development is assumed to have occurred but this is not true development because development should address the needs of man. Capital accumulation, financial deepening, technological progress, and institution building are the key drivers responsible for long run economic growth for countries. Nevertheless, improving the state of these key factors does not necessarily translate to economic development. However, achieving economic growth is not sufficient for attaining economic development. Therefore, government's objective of socio-economic development must be beyond increasing GDP (Onyimadu, 2015).

Having stated the logic of economy via development and its import in a system, it now gives us too many worries on the nature of Nigerian economy which has continuously been bedeviled by cancerous leadership and functional deformity. SON's leadership seems to be weak to implement its core objectives which end on papers alone. Onyibor (2020) opined that the organization (SON) lacks basic understanding on what it is required to do stating that if they organization is functional, how come the market is jaundiced with unending influx of fake and substandard products. Obinwa (2020) reacts while responding to the containers trapped by the Nigerian Customs Service, that the continuous tracking and importation of fake products is because government personnel have compromised the standard. He stated that it is perplexing to note that most of these importers get easy passage when the personnel compromise a lot after engaging in a dubious settlement. In expressing his anger, he went to say that everybody is tired of hearing such news, that it is only a sincere government that has the capacity to stop the wickedness.

In sum, it is germane to note that Nigerian economy has not fared well as a result of institutional, systemic and structural failure to execute vital functions in the system. Thus, we shall turn to look at what really constitute organization to know how to approach the narrative of SON's performance in Nigeria.

Data Presentation and Analysis

How has Standard Organization of Nigeria's fight against substandard goods impacted on the Nigerian economy?

Table 1: Respondents on how Standard Organization of Nigeria's fight against substandard goods impacted on the Nigerian economy

Mean rating of respondents on how Standard Organization of Nigeria's fight against substandard goods impacted on the Nigerian economy		SA	A	D	SD	D	Mean	Remark
1	In ability of Standard Organization of Nigeria to wage war again fake drugs have negatively affected Nigeria's economy	171	276	52	25	524	3.1303	Agreed
2	Efforts made by SON to wage war against the influx of substandard goods has shown why the country loses a lot of money annually	180	313	31	-	524	3.2833	Agreed
3	Due to the inconsistency of the fight against substandard products, so many businesses have struggled to survive	110	383	28	3	524	3.1445	Agreed
4	The inability of SON to track down peddlers of fake drugs and products in Nigeria has incurred lots of loses on the country and individuals	132	364	4	24	524	3.1530	Agreed
5	SON has claimed that people in power are making their output poor while trying to track the peddlers of fake goods in Nigeria	128	370	4	22	524	3.1501	Agreed
6	Nigeria loses lots of money due to the prevalence of fake and substandard product in the country.	166	353	5	-	524	3.3088	Agreed
Cluster Mean							3.213887	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Discussion of the Result Hypothesis

From the trajectory of responses above, it revealed the impact of the performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods impacted on the Nigerian economy. Based on the above responses, it shows that some pressing needs of standard Organization of Nigeria are made known through the process. Through the process it is believe the performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods impacted on the Nigerian economy will benefit future generation where concerted efforts are made. It is in line with the above that Respondent 1, 4, 6 and 9 stated that SON in Nigeria is not doing well by coming up with policy and holistic application law, but expressed their resentment that such has been hijacked by the enemies of the state. They lauded the SON to some extent in limiting the wider spread of the fake and substandard products in Nigeria which if they continue in the same line will bring about relative change in the system. By doing so, it will resuscitate the confidence of the masses in the institution and it capacity to wage war against continuous influx of fake and substandard goods and products in Nigeria. Finally, performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods will meaningfully impact on the Nigerian economy and help to ensure positive, effective and efficient utilization produced and imported products.

H₀₃: Poor performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods has negative impacted on the Nigerian economy.

**Table 2: Test of Hypothesis
Correlations**

		POPE	SUSTG
EMCT	Pearson Correlation	1	.984**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	524	524
EMTR	Pearson Correlation	.984**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	524	524

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Computation: SPSS Ver. 20

Where:

POPE = Poor Performance

SUSTG = Substandard goods

Table 2 reveals the correlation analysis that Poor performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods has negative impacted on the Nigerian economy. From the table, it shows that there is a statistically significant relationship existing between the variables with Pearson’s coefficient of .984 and p-value of .000 (p-value < .05).

Implication: Reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that poor performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods has negative impacted on the Nigerian economy.

This study is imperative as it explored Standard Organization of Nigeria Operations and the Proliferation of Substandard Goods in the Nigerian Economy, 2010-2022. As a matter of fact, the study was guided by three hypotheses that were drawn from the three research questions.

the third hypothesis focused on Poor performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods has negative impacted on the Nigerian economy, between 2010 - 2022. From the study six (6) instruments were generated to test the hypothesis under table 4.9. Finding revealed that it is on the basis of the above that the study stated that Poor performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods has negative impacted on the Nigerian economy. This has resulted in Poor performance of Standard Organization of Nigeria in the fight against substandard goods has negative impacted on the Nigerian economy between 2010 - 2022. The implication is that poor performance of the standard organization of Nigeria and institutional decay are possible cause of the influx or infiltration of the Nigeria economy with substandard goods.

In sum, this study is germane to the extent that it exposed the poor and weak institutions we have in Nigeria and the extent Nigerian businessmen have gone in exploiting these weaknesses to the enlargement of their various pockets. Just as we argued abinitio, corruption is a major challenge, impunity which gives them the audacity is another and weak infrastructures have all resulted in poor handing of the perpetrators in the state. Governmental weakness in terms of institutions are also some other possible ways of showing that less attention is given to the solving the perennial problem of preventing the proliferation of the substandard goods in the Nigerian economy. As such, there is serious danger ahead due to the fact that a lot of fake, illegal and substandard products have found their ways in the Nigerian market.

Conclusion

In sum, this study has shown to a large extent that Standard organization of Nigeria operation in Nigeria has been bedeviled with numerous challenges ranging from inadequate personnel, corruption, impunity and gross ineptitude. The study has revealed through the three tested hypotheses that the above listed challenges were the major problems limiting the operations of SON in waging war against the proliferation of Nigerian economic market with fake and substandard goods. As such, the manifestations of such fake, illegal, outdated, expired and substandard goods has resulted in unleashing dangerous and harmful impact on the

lives and property of Nigerians. Regular consumption of these fake and substandard products has amounted to economic wastage and sabotage. So many people are trapped in the hospitals across Nigeria due to the consumption of fake, expired and substandard products. These products range from: consumables, drugs, food contents to public utility products, pipes, cement, building rods and machines. Reactions coming from SON reveal that the perpetrators of the dastard acts are not considering people lives as they are only interested in the excess and illegal money that will end in their various pockets. Thus, having carried out empirical study guided by mixed design involving, it is germane to state that due to weak governmental institutions to guide the influx or proliferation of the economy with fake and substandard products, lots of harms have been unleashed on human lives and property.

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