

QUALITY CONTROL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE MANDATE OF STANDARDS ORGANIZATION OF NIGERIA*

Abstract

At the fulcrum of ensuring the maximization of the benefits that accrues to economic integration, as well taking advantage of the benefits of the theory of comparative advantage is; standardization. The Standards Organization of Nigeria was established with the mandate of ensuring standardization with respect to imports and exports in Nigeria. This mandate is achieved by the publication and review of Nigeria's Industrial Standards and the measurement of these industrial products against these preset standards to ascertain an effective system of quality assurance within the country. Since its coming into force, the organization has published about 965 industrial standards and has been involved in an array of activities geared towards ascertaining standardization of goods within the country. However, this paper finds that there appears to be a number of challenges that hinders the full actualization of the mandates of the organization, a fact which has contributed to the influx of substandard goods into the country and impacted negatively on the health and safety of the citizenry as well as the economic growth of the country. Using a desk-based methodology, this paper considers the statutory mandates of the Standards organization of Nigeria, the activities of the organization in achieving its mandates, the challenges that hinders the attainment of its mandates, and concludes by proffering recommendations.

Keywords: Standardization, Quality Control, Consumerism, Economic Integration.

1. Introduction

Economic integration has seen the movement of products and services transcend geographical boundaries. However, while these has yielded economic growth and propelled industrial restructuring, the influx of commodities into a country needs to be checked against sub standardization. Again, the quest for economic benefits even for local manufacturers may manifestly yield the production of goods lacking in quality to the detriment of the consumers, as well as the competitive strength of the country, in the global market.¹ It is against this backdrop that the establishment of the Standards Organization of Nigeria became necessary. The Standards Organization of Nigeria was established to check the quality of industrial products against standards predetermined by it; a process referred to as standardization.² Standardization refers to a framework of agreements that all relevant parties in an industry or organization must adhere to, in other to ensure that all processes associated with the creation of a good or performance of a service are performed within set guidelines.³ Ensuring standardization has economic as well as health or safety implications for the country involved, hence the mandate of the Organization.⁴ This paper is divided into 6 parts and shall discuss the statutory mandates of the Standards Organization of Nigeria, how the organization actualizes it, as well as the contemporary challenges it is faced with.

2. Establishment of the Standard Organization of Nigeria

The oil boom in the early 1970s stimulated domestic production and facilitated massive importation of goods.⁵ Consequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria upon the realization that most goods possess some unobservable or intrinsic attributes which made consumers' evaluation before purchase, more difficult established the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON).⁶ The Standards Organization of Nigeria is the apex standardization body in Nigeria, and its establishment has been the amalgam of different amendments to the principal Decree, which was promulgated in 1971, under the military administration of General Yakubu Gowon. By Decree No 56 of 1971, which had a commencement date of 1st of January 1970, the organization is charged with the responsibility for developing and enforcing product and process standards among others. This Act however, has undergone four amendments, namely; Act No 20 of 1976, Act No 32 of 1984, Act No 18 of 1990 and Act No 9 of 2004, which has now been repealed and replaced by Act No. 14 of 2015 and all these amendments have

***By Rachael Oreoluwa OJO-SOLOMON**, Lecturer, College of Law, Bowen University, Iwo Osun State, Nigeria. Email: oreoluwaajosolomon@gmail.com.

¹ Okorie A and Humphrey A. 2016. Standards Organization of Nigeria and Funding Challenges to Quality Control. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 70. Retrieved on July 11, 2021 from <https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/9436>.

² Antonio C. 2004. Standardization in Action. *European Conference on Information Systems*. Retrieved on July 11, 2021 from <<https://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2004/39>>.

³ Grant M. 2021. Standardization in Action. Retrieved on July 08, 2021 from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/standardization.asp>

⁴ Mbaogu O. 2008. Evaluation of the Performances of the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) in Anambra State. Thesis. Management. Business Administration. University of Nigeria. P.39.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ *Ibid*.

cumulated in the robust frame work which underscores the Standards Organization of Nigeria.⁷ In 1976, Decree No 20 of 1976, amended the 1971 Act and conferred on the Honourable Minister of Industry, the power to declare mandatory Industrial Standards in respect of products or processes recommended by the Nigerian Standards Council.⁸ The 1987 amendment changed the name of the organization from Nigerian Standard Organization (NSO) to Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) in order to eliminate conflicting identity with the then Nigerian Security Organization.⁹ The 1990 Decree which became Act No 9 of 2004, did a number of restructuring to the Act among which was conferring on SON, partial autonomy from the Ministry of Industry, establishing SON as a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal, that may sue and be sued in its corporate name, provision for strict enforcement of the powers of seizure, confiscation and destruction of substandard products among others.

However, with the growing increase in the number of substandard products which resulted in the loss of life and property and the inability of the 2004 Act to ensure that standards relating to products are met, the 2015 Act was enacted.¹⁰ The 2015 Act although retained to a large extent some provisions of the repealed 2004 Act added some major provisions to ensure the efficacy of the organization,¹¹ among which was creating additional functions for the Council¹² established under the Act. This is because the council could only function in the confines of its powers, and these powers were limited.¹³ It also incorporated stringent penalties for non-compliance to ensure deterrence, with penalties being as high as ₦ 2,000,000 in some cases.¹⁴ The powers of the organization were also increased to include the power to recall a defective commodity,¹⁵ power to stop and search,¹⁶ power of seizure and detention,¹⁷ powers of the Director-General in relation to hazardous products,¹⁸ the designation of ports for special entry,¹⁹ destruction of violative goods,²⁰ among others. The Act also introduced provisions for the protection of the organization and its members to ensure that they can carry out their duties without the fear of law suits trailing them.²¹

3. The Standards Organization of Nigeria and Quality Control

Concisely, the statutory mandate of SON is to ensure the standardization of imported and locally manufactured industrial products within Nigeria, through quality control geared towards consumerism and effected through all the various means allowed by the Act. Quality control is the use of techniques and activities to achieve sustain and improve the quality of a product or service. It involves the inspection of products to ensure that they are in line with the standards of quality set, and also that work is being performed correctly.²² However, standards must first be set before control measures can be put in place; this is because control is the measurement of performance against standards.²³ The commission is vested with the power pursuant to the Act²⁴ to establish Nigerian Industrial Standards (NIS)²⁵ which in its opinion are of significance to the national economy and conforms with the objectives of the Act. These standards are set after informing all the parties which in the opinion of the Commission have a substantial interest in the industrial design in question²⁶ and a committee has been constituted to inquire into all the relevant aspects of the matter and make a report on it.²⁷ In the last four years, SON has

⁷Federal Government of Nigeria: Single Window for Trade. About SON. Retrieved on July 7, 2021 from <https://trade.gov.ng/son/home.do?mobile=false>.

⁸ Akanya J. Activities of Standard Organization of Nigeria. *Proceedings XVII IMEKO World Congress*, June 22-27, 2003. Dubrovnik, Croatia.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Law Pavilion. The Standard Organization Act, 2015. Retrieved on July 7, 2021 from <https://lawpavilion.com/blog/standards-organization-of-nigeria-act-2015/>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Section 4 of the Standard Organization of Nigeria(SON) Act, No.14 of 2015.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Section 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Section 46.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Subsection 1 of section 30.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Section 29.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Section 28.

²⁰ *Ibid.* Section 47.

²¹ Part 8 of the SON Act.

²² Sule O & Aminu S. 2017. Quality Control: The Challenges of Globalization to Nigerian Manufacturing Firms. *Journal of Business*. Vol. 2 No. 2 Retrieved on July 07, 2021 from <http://journalofbusiness.us>

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Section 23(1) of the SON Act 2015.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Section 24.

²⁶ *Ibid.* Section 23(2)(a).

²⁷ *Ibid.* Section 23(2)(b).

provided about 965 Nigerian Industrial Standards which have been approved by the Governing Council for use with Nigeria. There were 237 in 2017, 339 in 2018, 225 in 2019 and 168 in 2020.²⁸ Hence, Nigerian products as well as imported products ought to have their quality weighed against these standards. Manufacturers whose products meet the required standard are permitted to affix a special certification mark that shows that such an item is one of those falling under the NIS. This mark is known as the Certification Mark or the Nigerian Mark of Quality.²⁹ The significance of this is that the consumer is assured of the quality of the goods, because such goods bearing the mark has been tested and certified by the Organization to have complied with the necessary NIS.³⁰

Activities of SON with respect to Quality Control and Standardization

In pursuance of its statutory mandate to ensure standardization through quality control, the Organization, has devised various means to tackle sub standardization in the country. With respect to imported goods, at the point of entry of these goods into the Nigerian market, SON carries out cargo inspections, and tests samples of these goods for conformity with the Nigerian Industrial Standards.³¹ In the event that these goods fall below the minimum parameters with respect to quality specifications, the Organization may exercise its discretion on dealing with the goods, having regard to the level of deviation.³² However, where the deviation is so wide as to constitute a health hazard or create a harmful effect on the economy, the defective consignment shall be confiscated and destroyed in the presence of the parties concerned at a fixed time and place.³³ The Organization may also require the owner of the good to pay the cost of destruction, including transporting and storing the goods before destruction.³⁴ Also, the powers of the organization extend to conducting routine inspections of production lines in industries as well as the open market and carrying out tests on sample goods taken from them.³⁵ A market raid is however, seldom held by the organization, except where it is compelled to get rid of extremely substandard goods from the market.³⁶ These inspections cut across all industries where an industrial standard has been set. For instance, on the 17th of July 2016, SON, stormed some markets in Owerri, Imo State, when the officials discovered that the market was flooded with suspected substandard iron rods, took samples of the rods for testing and closed the shops. These rods were said to have occasioned the collapse of buildings, in many events.³⁷ Similarly, on the 24th of January 2017, SON stormed a popular phone market in Abuja by surprise and carted away hundreds of phones considered to be substandard, while also making arrests of those who resisted the search.³⁸ In collaboration with the Nigeria Police Force, the Organization on the 2nd of July 2020 seized 504 cartons of substandard Bic brand of Shaving sticks in Ebutte Ero Market of Lagos state, after its earlier evacuation of 196 cartons of the substandard products in the same market, bringing the total of the confiscated goods to 700.³⁹

Another mechanism put in place by SON in ensuring standardization in products distributed in the country is the Consumer Complaint Investigation Scheme⁴⁰. Under this scheme, Consumers are assisted to get redress through arbitration from the supplier of a defective product bought from the open market, where the defect can be attributed to the fault of the supplier.⁴¹ However, before, exercising this power, the officers of the organization are required to ascertain the genuineness of the cases. Therefore, they must ensure that the privilege has not been biased by consumers before making a judgment based on the empirical evidence before it.⁴² Hence, in some cases the

²⁸ SON and Challenges of Products Standardization in Nigeria. *New Telegraph*. September 6, 2020. Retrieved on July 08, 2021 from <<https://www.newtelegraphng.com/son-and-challenges-of-products-standardisation-in-nigeria/>>.

²⁹ Section 25(1) of the SON Act 2015.

³⁰ Obumneme-Okafor N. 2010. The Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) and the Protection of the Consumer in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Academic Forum*. Vol. 19. No. 2. P.3.

³¹ *Ibid*.

³² Mbaogu O. 2008. Evaluation of the Performances of the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) in Anambra State. Thesis. Management. Business Administration. University of Nigeria. P.39.

³³ Section 47(1) of the SON Act 2015

³⁴ *Ibid*. subsection 2.

³⁵ Section 30 of the SON Act 2015.

³⁶ Mbaogu O. 2008. Evaluation of the Performances of the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) in Anambra State. Thesis. Management. Business Administration. University of Nigeria. P.39.

³⁷ Nkwopara C. June 17, 2016 SON Raids Imo Markets, Closes 12 shops. *Vanguard News*. Retrieved on the July 8, 2021 from <https://google.com/amp/s/www.vanguardngr.com/2016/06/son-raids-imo-markets-closes-12-shops/%3famp=1>.

³⁸ SON storms Abuja markets, confiscates fake phones worth millions of Naira. *Oak Tv* (January 24, 2017) Retrieved on July 10, 2021 from <https://oak.tv/son-storms-abuja-mrkets-confiscates/>.

³⁹ Okojie J. SON, July 22, 2020. Police Raid Markets, Seize Fake Shaving Sticks in Lagos. *Business Day*. Retrieved on July 8, 2021 from <https://www.google.com/amp/s/businessday.ng/news/article/son-police-raid-markets-seize-fake-shaving-sticks-in-lagos/amp>.

⁴⁰ Mbaogu O. 2008. Evaluation of the Performances of the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) in Anambra State. Thesis. Management. Business Administration. University of Nigeria. P.32

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² *Ibid*.

allegations must be corroborated with laboratory analysis.⁴³ Standard Organization of Nigeria Conformity Assessment Program (SONCAP), which took effect on the 1st of December 2005, is another mechanism put in place for the achievement of the organization's objectives.⁴⁴ SONCAP is a pre-shipment verification of conformity to standards, used in verifying that products to be shipped into Nigeria are in conformity with the applicable Nigerian Industrial Standards or approved equivalents and technical regulations.⁴⁵ Where such goods meet the required standards a SONCAP certificate is issued, and this is a mandatory custom clearance document, without which such goods will be subjected to delays and possible denial of entry.⁴⁶

Consumerism and Quality Control

While standardization is geared towards the attainment of quality control, quality control on the other hand is geared towards the attainment of consumerism. Consumerism is defined as the activities of government, business and independent organizations that are designed to protect individuals from practices that infringe upon their rights and consumption.⁴⁷ It seeks to protect the right of the consumer to quality products in the open market. Despite the enormous roles and powers granted to the commission, importation and local production of fake, adulterated and substandard products are in the increase in Nigeria,⁴⁸ many of which have resulted in deaths, collapsed buildings, roads and bridges among others, necessitating an inquiry into the role of regulatory agencies and consumer protection institutions.⁴⁹ In 2013, Nigeria was rated by the World Trade Organization as the worst in the world with respect to substandard goods, following a market record in 2011 which showed 80 percent peddling of substandard products.⁵⁰ Available statistics show clearly that if there is any country that is notorious for peddling and living on fake items with reckless impunity, then Nigeria is unbeatable.⁵¹ Consumers are faced with about an 80 percent chance of buying fake products in a market where second-hand goods are preferred as the original.⁵² The global media is flooded with news of harmful and substandard products in Nigerian Markets, and there is hardly any product that is not either faked or its quality substandard when compared with the original, ranging from pharmaceuticals to the textile industry, beverages, ceramics, electrical and electronics, building, book publishing, music and even Nigeria's fast-rising home video industry.⁵³ These events have brought into question, the effectiveness of the Standards Organization of Nigeria, in the fulfillment of its statutory mandate.

4. Contemporary Challenges to the Execution of Son's Mandate

The express mention of the statutory mandates of the Standard Organization of Nigeria does not expressly devolve into execution, and neither does execution devolve into their attainment, and it is with respect to this that this section will consider the constraints to the satisfactory attainment of the organization's mandates.

Nigeria's Foreign Policies

In the International system, different nations pursue their national interest within the global arena having put into consideration, the benefits they stand to gain from such relationships.⁵⁴ Since the year 2010, China's rapidly expanding ties with Africa has superseded the United States', because of its massive investments in the country, which is largely aided by China's Investible Export Loan Assistance of \$150 billion to its multinational

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴FGN. Single Window For Trade. 2012. SONCAP Scheme Retrieved July 12, 2021 from <https://trade.gov.ng/son/home.do?mobile=false>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Obumneme-Okafor N. 2010. The Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) and the Protection of the Consumer in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Academic Forum*. Vol. 19. No. 2. P.3.

⁴⁷Ayozie O. 2013. Consumerism the Shame of Marketing in Nigeria Challenges to Corporate Practices. *International Postgraduate Business Journal*. Vol.5(1) P. 5.

⁴⁸ Okorie A and Humphrey A. 2016. Standards Organization of Nigeria and Funding Challenges to Quality Control. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 70. Retrieved on July 11, 2021 from <https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/9436>.

⁴⁹Hussein A & Kachwamba M. 2011. Low Quality Products in Developing Countries' Markets: Is it one of Globalization Challenges? *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*. Vol.2 No.1. P.30.

⁵⁰Okorie A and Humphrey A. 2016. Standards Organization of Nigeria and Funding Challenges to Quality Control. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 70. Retrieved on July 11, 2021 from <https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/9436>.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Omoh G. 2012. Nigeria is being de-industrialized, under siege of substandard products. *Vanguard Nigeria*. Retrieved on July 05, 2021 from <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/02/nigeria-is-being-de-industrialized-under-siege-ofsubstandard-products/#sthash.tRSXDURK.dpuf>.

⁵⁴Denus T. 2007. China's Engagement in Africa: Scope, Significance and Consequences. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Vol. 44, No.3 P.462.

corporations.⁵⁵ Over the years, China has been relating to Nigeria, through trade, aid, and investments while Nigeria has equally been exploring trading opportunities in China.⁵⁶ This Sino-Nigeria Relation also has its premise on exploring their economic comparative advantages for mutual benefits.⁵⁷ This relation has also grown as China's growing economy requires more raw material resources from Nigeria, such as Crude Oil, while China takes advantage of Nigeria's huge population, which is estimated to be around 150 Million People, to generate extraterritorial markets for its manufactured goods.⁵⁸ However, it appears that this trade relation might have a negative impact on the Nigerian Economy with respect to standardization and anti-dumping measures. In the year 2012, the then Director-General of SON; Joseph Odumodu remarked that the statistics from a survey conducted by the Organization in 2011, showed that the importation of substandard goods costs the country an estimated annual loss of 1 Trillion Naira, while also turning Nigeria into a dumping ground for unwanted products from these foreign countries.⁵⁹ He further stated that over 80 percent of the substandard products imported into the country are of Asian Origin; a scourge worse than terrorism.⁶⁰ In his words, over 20 percent of annual road accidents were as a result of the over 50 Million sub-standard tyres, imported into the country.⁶¹ It was therefore put forward by him, that the Federal Government needs to execute a bilateral agreement with the states in this Continent, where products that are unacceptable in their country should not be brought into Nigeria.⁶²

Funding Challenges in the Organization and the Manufacturing Industry

The Manufacturing sector plays a catalytic role in a modern economy and it has many dynamic benefits.⁶³ Therefore, in many advanced economies, it is the leading sector in many respects. It is an avenue for increasing productivity in relation to import replacement and export expansion, creating foreign exchange earning capacity and raising employment as well as per capita income.⁶⁴ However, a major challenge that plagues this industry is that of insufficient funding.⁶⁵ This sector runs on heavy finances, and this becomes even more augmented with the state of the Nigerian economy where there is inflation, devaluation of the currency, inadequate power supply among many others. It is therefore difficult for an industry that runs on inadequate funding to satisfy the standards required for quality assurance. The consequential turn-in event, therefore, is that for locally manufactured goods that fall under the powers of SON, there is a proliferation in the number of substandard goods, a fact which affects the attainment of its mandate and no amount of sensitization would resolve it. On the part of the Agency, The Standards Organization of Nigeria is an agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria, and as such a part of its funding is sourced from the budgetary allocation of the Federation on a yearly basis.⁶⁶ However, records show that it remains one of the least funded Agencies of the Federal Government.⁶⁷ By the 2021 Budget allocation, its total allocation is ₦3,901,866,383 (Three Billion, Nine Hundred and One Million, Eight Hundred and Sixty Six Thousand, Three Hundred and Three Naira).⁶⁸ While to the average man in the society this appears to be a huge amount of money. However, taking into consideration the current devaluation of the Naira, Inflation and the huge allocation given to other agencies of the Federal Government with lesser mandates, the allegation of the SON as regards inadequate funding might be minimally corroborated. Therefore, for an agency with a mandate, that has strong consequences for the economy, funding ought not to be a challenge.

⁵⁵ Brautigam D. 2009. *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Sting of China in Africa*. New York: Oxford Press. P. 22.

⁵⁶ Raji S & Ogunrinu A. 2018. *Chinese Investment and Its Implications For Nigeria's Economic Security*. *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*. Vol. 3 No.6. P. 123.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Nigeria Loses Over N1tn Annually on Importation of Substandard Products-SON. *Premium Times*. Nov. 23, 2012. Retrieved on July 21, 2021 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/108324-nigeria-loses-over-n1tn-annually-on-importation-of-sub-standard-products-son.html>.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Research Clue. 2012. *Finance Challenges of Manufacturing Companies in Nigeria and their Contributions to the Economic Growth of Nigeria*. Retrieved July 18, 2021 from <https://nairaproject.com/m/projects/233.html>.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Marire M, Nwaankwo B & Agbor N. 2014. *The Problem of Quality Control in the Manufacturing Sector: A Study of Nigerian Breweries Plc, Enugu*. *International Organization of Scientific Research- Journal of Business and Management*. 100. Retrieved on July 07, 2021 from <https://www.iosrjournals.org>.

⁶⁶ Section 15(2)(d) of the SON Act 2015.

⁶⁷ Okorie A and Humphrey A. 2016. *Standards Organization of Nigeria and Funding Challenges to Quality Control*. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 70. Retrieved on July 11, 2021 from <https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/9436..>

⁶⁸ FRN. Budget Office of the Federation. July, 2021. *2021 Signed Budget*. Retrieved on July 19, 2021 from <https://www.budbetoffice.gov.ng/index.php/resources/internal-resources/budget-document/2021-signed-budget>.

Unfavourable Governmental Policies

In 2001, under the first Civilian Regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Standards Organization of Nigeria was ejected from major entrance routes into the country, particularly the Air and Sea Ports.⁶⁹ The rationale behind this was the need to facilitate the clearance of goods and eliminate port congestion.⁷⁰ This became necessary because of the neoliberal reforms which came in, with the 4th Republic and paved the way for an increased influx of foreign direct investment, which stimulated domestic production as well as massive importation of goods into the country.⁷¹ Although the Organization responded to this by situating a one-stop office in Apapa close to the port, this has not successfully ameliorated the hardships posed to the Organization's effectiveness.⁷² Speaking during a sensitization program for port operators in Lagos State with the theme; 'Facilitating Trade Through SON Automated Services' on the 1st of March 2020, the recently retired Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the Standards Organization of Nigeria; Osita Aboloma stated that 'It is important to note that non-involvement of SON at some Ports in the Country's operations has continued to pose challenges particularly to the agency's compliance and monitoring units... it is easier to fight the influx of substandard products at the points of entry than chasing them around all over the country in markets and warehouses, among others'.⁷³ It was stated during the event that over 75% of the products imported into the country daily, monthly or yearly come through the seaports and waterways.⁷⁴ Therefore, it is difficult to ignore the maritime sectors' operators in the quest for zero imports of substandard and unwholesome products, as well as the Federal Government's Ease of Doing Business Policy.⁷⁵

False Declaration of Shipment Contents

Another challenge to the effectiveness of SON in actualizing its objects is the dishonesty of the clearing agents. On the 30th of April 2017, the Director of Monitoring and compliance of the Standards Organization of Nigeria; Engineer Bede Obayi stated that the major challenge facing SON is the false declaration of goods at entry points.⁷⁶ In Nigeria, there is the duplicity of office and as such with respect to imports, the exercise of power is dependent on the extent conferred and the limitations imposed on a body by the law. While the mandate of the organization is to ensure elaboration of industrial standards for goods made in Nigeria and monitor compliance of these products to the set standards, the Organization is challenged by those who deliberately import SON's regulated products and declare them like that of other agencies such as the NAFDAC. Hence, they will declare one thing at the point of the Pre-Arrival Assessment Report and a different thing at the point where the Cargo will be released. The effect of this therefore will be to oust each of these agencies of their powers in respect of the good shipped.⁷⁷

5. Impacts of Substandardization

A criterion for the determination of a country's level of economic development and improvement with respect to the quality of the lives of its citizenry, is the standard of goods and services, produced and consumed in the country.⁷⁸ The reason for this is that the standards against which these qualities in goods and services are determined are critical for the development of any economy, its competitiveness, wealth creation, as well as the health of its citizens.⁷⁹ Accordingly, the World Bank and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) see these factors as being crucial in economic development and serve as proofs that a government is committed to the welfare of the citizens.⁸⁰ The rationale behind this is that while the focus is on building a resilient

⁶⁹ Okorie A and Humphrey A. 2016. Standards Organization of Nigeria and Funding Challenges to Quality Control. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 65. Retrieved on July 11, 2021 from <https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/9436>.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Udeme C. April 30, 2017. Our Problem With Fake Imported Products-SON. *Vanguard Nigeria*. Retrieved July 12, 2021 from <https://www.vanguardngr.com,2017/04/problem-fake-imported-products-son>.

⁷³ Abade E. March 02, 2020. DG Seeks SON's Return to Ports to Fight Influx of Substandard Goods. *Guardian Nigeria*. Retrieved July 12, 2021 from <https://m.guardian.ng/news/dg-seeks-sons-return-to-ports-to-fight-influx-of-substandard-goods/>.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Udeme C. April 30, 2017. Our Problem With Fake Imported Products-SON. *Vanguard Nigeria*. Retrieved July 12, 2021 from <https://www.vanguardngr.com,2017/04/problem-fake-imported-products-son>.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Uba C. July 2, 2020. Examining Nigerian National Standardization Strategy. *This Day*. Retrieved July 19, 2021 from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/07/02/examining-nigerian-national-standardization-strategy/>.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ UNIDO. 2020. How Industrial Development Matters to the Well Being of the Population: Some Statistical Evidence. Retrieved July 21, 2021 from <https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/HOW%2520INDUSTRIAL%2520DEVELOPMENT%2520MATTERS&2520TO%2520THE%2520WELL->

economy, the need for quality and standards must not be glossed over, as they also serve as evidence of good governance. Extrapolating from the above, it follows therefore, that proliferation in the number of substandard goods within a country, affects its economic growth through a reduction in the revenue generated, hampers its competitive strengths in the global market as well as its comparative advantage. In the year 2012, the then Director-General of the Standards Organization of Nigeria; Odumodu Joseph, remarked that Nigeria loses over One Trillion annually to importation and domestication of substandard items,⁸¹ this undoubtedly accounts for a huge reduction in internal revenue. It is a known fact that Nigeria is primarily an import-dependent country, a fact that has hindered it in participating effectively in the benefits of trade liberalization guaranteed by the World Trade Organization.⁸² However, in addition to this is the menace engendered in the substandard quality of its industrial products, so much so that in the global markets its products cannot compete effectively in foreign markets or Economic Areas such as that of the European Union where stringent conditions are posed on the quality of products allowed.

The principle of comparative advantage makes a country derive economic benefits from focusing on the areas of its economic strengths in the global economic market.⁸³ However, the concept of comparative advantage is intricately linked with that of standardization, and this is because to assert economic strength in a given industry, the country must be able to guarantee the dispensation of quality. The resultant effect therefore, is that the country begins to lose its comparative advantage through sub standardization and becomes susceptible to industrial dumping. In the supply chain, while the consumers are at risk of health hazards or depreciation in the quality of goods purchased,⁸⁴ the retailers are also prone to economic loss. The reason for the latter is that many of them are not sensitized as to the criteria for determining compliance with the NIS. In addition to this, the Nigerian Mark of Quality may be compromised, and camouflaged as genuine. Therefore, when a raid is done and goods confiscated by the Organization, these retailers become vulnerable to economic loss.⁸⁵ While it may seem as though the Manufacturers bear almost no brunt from the rod of standardization, they are also prone to have their business shut down, penalties imposed, a consumer action instituted against them, and ultimately deprive the Government of necessary revenue that could have been garnered.⁸⁶

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

While the mandates of the Standards Organization of Nigeria is clear and its objectives promising, the failure to fully actualize and attain relatively high success in the pursuance of these mandates is the amalgam of so many problems intricately tied to all the stakeholders involved. In essence, the Government, the citizenry i.e. the consumers, retailers and manufacturers as well as the Organization itself are responsible for the failure to actualize these objects. Conversely, therefore, to attain these mandates all stakeholders must work in concert. It is therefore recommended that Governmental policies should not be designed in such a way as to make the environment uncondusive for the attainment of these mandates. The organization owes it to the people to sensitize them on the manner in which substandard goods can be easily identified, and it must be committed to the attainment of the mandate. Manufacturers should not sacrifice quality on the altar of economic benefits and when they choose to do so, penalties should be so strict, that the fear of being caught under the law would deter them.

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