

# **Evaluating Public and Industry Compliance with Standards Organisation of Nigeria's Regulations for Safety and National Development in Jabi, Abuja**

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## **Abstract**

This study evaluated the awareness, compliance, and implications of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria's (SON) regulations among industries and the public in Jabi, Abuja. It addressed the challenges of inadequate public and industry understanding of SON's standards, which hinder compliance and pose risks to consumer safety and national development. Drawing on Public Awareness Theory and Stakeholder Theory, the research investigated the role of effective communication and collaborative stakeholder engagement in fostering regulatory adherence. A descriptive

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survey design was adopted, targeting Jabi residents, Julius Berger construction company, SON officials, and consumers. A sample of 383 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed with descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Findings indicated moderate public awareness and varying levels of industry compliance, constrained by ineffective communication, resource limitations, and technical gaps. Non-compliance was associated with the production of substandard products, which compromises consumers' safety. The study recommended enhancing SON's enforcement mechanisms, conducting regular workshops for industries, and launching targeted awareness campaigns using diverse communication channels. Collaborations with stakeholders, including law enforcement and industry associations, were also advised to strengthen compliance and protect consumers.

**Keywords:** Compliance, Industry, National Development, Public, Regulations, Safety and Standards Organisation of Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) is a globally recognised entity that develops and publishes international standards to ensure the quality, safety, and efficiency of products, services, and systems. ISO's standards provide a crucial framework for maintaining consistency and quality across industries, enabling nations to align their regulatory practices with internationally accepted best practices. In this regard, Nigeria's Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) functions as the nation's primary regulatory body, responsible for establishing and enforcing quality and safety standards. Established by Act No. 56 of 1971 and reinforced by the Standards Organisation of Nigeria Act, 2015, SON is tasked with regulating the quality of goods and services, safeguarding consumer interests, and supporting national development (Adebayo & Oke, 2019). The importance of compliance with product standards cannot be overstated, as it is vital for ensuring consumer safety and promoting sustainable economic growth.

Standards form the foundation for industrial competitiveness, providing a guarantee of product safety and reliability, thereby fostering consumer trust. By adhering to these standards, businesses can mitigate the risks associated with substandard goods, such as health hazards, environmental degradation, and financial loss. In Nigeria, sectors such as food production and pharmaceuticals have seen considerable improvements in product quality and consumer safety, thanks to the more stringent enforcement of SON's regulations (Eze & Mbah, 2020). Furthermore, compliance stimulates industrial innovation, reduces the economic burden of product failures, and enhances Nigeria's competitiveness in global markets.

However, despite SON's regulatory efforts, a significant gap remains in public and industry awareness regarding the importance of compliance with these standards. This lack of awareness undermines the effectiveness of SON, as many businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), perceive compliance as an unnecessary financial burden rather than a strategic investment in product quality and consumer protection. Likewise, the general public often lacks an understanding of the dangers posed by substandard products, which continue to flood the market due to weak enforcement and inadequate public awareness campaigns. This lack of knowledge not only undermines consumer safety but also hampers economic progress, as the prevalence of counterfeit and unsafe goods continues unchecked (Olawale, Adeola, & Nwankwo 2022). Addressing these challenges necessitates a more comprehensive approach. SON must enhance its public awareness campaigns, provide industry workshops, and collaborate with media outlets to communicate the mutual benefits of standards compliance. Engaging key stakeholders, including trade associations, consumer advocacy groups, and educational institutions, will be critical to fostering a culture of compliance. By closing this knowledge gap, Nigeria can significantly improve consumer protection, strengthen its industrial base, and foster sustainable economic development. It is clear that for SON's regulatory efforts to achieve maximum impact, a more concerted focus on public education and sector-wide engagement is necessary. By emphasising the role that compliance plays in enhancing product quality, safety, and economic development, SON can create a more informed and responsible consumer base while enabling industries to grow within a framework of quality assurance.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Evaluate the roles of SON's regulatory enforcement in fostering compliance across different industries in Jabi, Abuja;
- ii. Assess the extent of public and industry awareness about the significance of adhering to SON's regulations;
- iii. Investigate the consequences of non-compliance on consumer safety and the prevalence of substandard products in Jabi, Abuja;
- iv. Examine the effect of compliance with SON's regulations on consumer trust and the broader process of national development in Jabi, Abuja.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)*

The Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) is the regulatory body mandated to establish, regulate, and enforce standards for products and services in Nigeria. Founded under Act No. 56 of 1971, it serves as the principal authority for ensuring that both imported and locally manufactured goods comply with safety and quality requirements. This role is essential not only for consumer protection but also for enhancing Nigeria's economic development through improved industrial processes (Akpan, 2018). SON's alignment with international bodies such as the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) ensures that Nigerian products meet global standards, fostering both local safety and international competitiveness (Oduro & Adebayo, 2021). In addition to regulating goods, SON works closely with businesses to promote understanding and adoption of these standards, which contribute significantly to the broader industrial growth of Nigeria.

#### *Standards Compliance*

Standards compliance refers to adherence to established requirements that guarantee the safety, quality, and environmental friendliness of products and services. In Nigeria, effective compliance with SON's standards is crucial for protecting consumers from hazardous goods and ensuring the smooth functioning of markets (Okoro & Chidozie, 2019). Achieving

compliance requires the coordinated effort of manufacturers, regulators, and consumers, with SON playing a key role in monitoring and enforcement. However, challenges such as lack of awareness, industry resistance, and weak enforcement mechanisms hinder widespread compliance in the country. In addition, businesses face significant challenges in meeting both local and international standards, which can sometimes result in the influx of substandard products into the Nigerian market. Nonetheless, efforts to improve compliance through better regulation and capacity building are essential for Nigeria's economic development and consumer safety.

#### *Consumer Safety*

Consumer safety refers to the protection of individuals from products or services that may pose health, safety, or environmental risks. In Nigeria, the absence of stringent enforcement of SON's standards has led to the widespread circulation of substandard products, putting consumers at risk. These products can lead to a variety of issues, including health hazards, economic losses, and even fatalities (Adebayo, 2021). Regulatory frameworks for consumer safety aim to ensure that goods and services meet established safety and quality criteria, reducing the likelihood of accidents and improving public health outcomes. Furthermore, the role of SON in enhancing consumer safety extends beyond compliance enforcement to include awareness campaigns and partnerships with industry stakeholders to promote safer production and consumption patterns.

#### *National Development*

National development encompasses the processes by which a nation improves its economic, social, and political structures to enhance the quality of life of its citizens. In Nigeria, industrialisation and the enforcement of product standards are integral to achieving sustainable development. By ensuring that products meet quality standards, SON supports not only consumer safety but also the growth of a robust manufacturing sector. The enforcement of standards encourages local industries to innovate, improve production processes, and compete globally (Akinwale & Yusuff, 2020). In this regard, standards contribute to the diversification of Nigeria's economy, enhancing both local manufacturing and international trade. In addition,

compliance with SON's standards is crucial for creating a favourable investment environment that attracts foreign direct investment, which is essential for the country's economic and industrial development.

### ***Review of Related Literature***

Akinbode's (2021) study, *The evolving role of standards organisations in developing economies: Insights from the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)*, provides a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted roles of standards organisations in promoting economic and social development. Akinbode expands the conversation beyond technical assistance, highlighting SON's influence on fostering trust between consumers and producers, stabilising markets, and improving national competitiveness. He emphasises the socio-political role of SON, particularly its function as a link between government policies and industry standards, which facilitates public health protection and encourages compliance with global quality benchmarks. While the study offers a valuable perspective on SON's contributions to economic resilience, it could benefit from a deeper exploration of the challenges the organisation faces, particularly in terms of resource constraints and enforcement issues. Additionally, although Akinbode discusses SON's role in stimulating trade and fostering innovation, the absence of empirical data connecting standardisation activities to specific economic outcomes limits the study's capacity to quantify these impacts effectively. A more detailed exploration of the tangible effects of SON's activities on economic performance would strengthen the argument.

Okoruwa and Onuigbo-Chatta (2021) in their study titled, *Review of food safety policy in Nigeria*, present a compelling examination of food safety policies in Nigeria, focusing on regulatory inefficiencies that undermine consumer protection. The study highlights significant challenges, such as poor enforcement mechanisms, inadequate funding, and limited inter-agencies collaboration, which collectively weaken the efficacy of food safety regulations. Moreover, the authors identify gaps in public awareness and industry compliance, noting that many stakeholders lack sufficient knowledge of food safety standards and their implications for public health. While their analysis effectively underscores structural and institutional limitations, it could have been enriched by exploring socio-economic factors, such as poverty and the informal nature of many food markets, which contribute to

non-compliance. Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged approach, combining robust enforcement with educational campaigns targeting both producers and consumers. Additionally, leveraging public-private partnerships could enhance resource mobilisation and drive compliance among food industry stakeholders.

Okafor and Abdul (2022) in their study, *Enhancing productivity and consumer satisfaction through standardisation: A case study of Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)*, present a compelling argument about the critical roles standard organisations play in improving industrial productivity and consumer satisfaction in developing nations. By highlighting SON's specific initiatives, such as capacity-building workshops and compliance monitoring, they offer a detailed view of how SON operationalises its mandate and addresses the risks posed by substandard goods. This nuanced approach provides a deeper understanding of the mechanisms behind standardisation and its impact. Their research fills important gaps identified in earlier studies, particularly by offering actionable recommendations such as public awareness campaigns and local partnerships to make standardisation more effective and accessible. However, their analysis could be enriched by considering the socio-cultural factors that influence standards compliance. For instance, the regional perceptions of product quality and the challenges faced by smaller producers in rural areas need further exploration. In addition, while Okafor and Abdul focus on the economic benefits of standardisation, more empirical data linking standards enforcement to specific market outcomes, like consumer safety and export growth, would enhance their argument. This could offer concrete evidence of how SON's work tangibly improves Nigeria's industrial landscape.

Adeyemo and Nwachukwu (2023), in their article, *Standardisation and economic growth in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects for sustainable development*, expand on Hayes' earlier work by exploring the roles of standardisation bodies like the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) in promoting economic development. They argue that the intersection of political will, economic resources, and governance structures is crucial for effective standardisation, highlighting the need for both technical and political commitment to ensure standards are enforced. Their work emphasises the socio-cultural complexities of implementing standardisation in a diverse

society like Nigeria, advocating for a more inclusive approach to standard creation that incorporates local customs and values. This participatory model is presented as key to fostering compliance, particularly in rural areas. While Adeyemo and Nwachukwu provide valuable insights into the multi-dimensional challenges of standardisation, their work could benefit from more empirical data, particularly on the effectiveness of participatory models in rural regions. Additionally, exploring how Nigeria's standardisation efforts intersect with global trade would strengthen their recommendations, especially in terms of enhancing Nigeria's competitiveness in international markets.

### ***Gaps in Literature***

The existing literature reveals several gaps in understanding the role of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) in regulating product quality and ensuring consumer safety. Akinbode (2021) examines the broader socio-economic and political roles of SON, but fails to address the specific challenges SON faces in its regulatory functions, such as limited resources and political interference, as highlighted by Adeyemo and Nwachukwu (2023). Moreover, while Okeke et al. (2022) focus on the regulatory challenges of counterfeit pharmaceuticals, Akinbode's study does not sufficiently explore the health risks posed by substandard products, particularly in the healthcare sector. Ogunyemi and Adeoye (2022) discuss the implications of substandard products on consumer safety, but their study lacks an in-depth examination of the direct impact of SON's standardisation efforts on individual consumer safety. In addition, while Okafor and Abdul (2022) discuss SON's role in enhancing productivity and competitiveness, they do not provide a detailed analysis of SON's impact on specific industries such as agriculture or manufacturing. These gaps highlight the need for further research into SON's operational challenges, the health and safety impacts of substandard products, and its sector-specific contributions to economic growth and consumer protection.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### ***Public Awareness Theory***

Public Awareness Theory, developed by Wilbur Schramm in 1977, focuses on the role of communication in shaping the public's understanding of issues



that impact society. Schramm's work suggests that the media and other communication channels are essential tools in raising public awareness, influencing perceptions, and mobilising individuals to act on issues. The theory asserts that for societies to thrive, people must be informed, which is particularly important when addressing societal issues like health, safety, and political or social challenges. Effective communication, therefore, is not just about information dissemination but also about engaging the public in meaningful ways. Schramm's framework implies that when individuals are well-informed, they are more likely to make decisions that benefit their well-being and the community as a whole. In the context of tackling substandard products, Public Awareness Theory becomes crucial. Regulatory bodies, such as the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), can leverage this theory to craft targeted campaigns that educate the public on the dangers of counterfeit goods and the benefits of adhering to international standards. When the public is aware of the risks involved with substandard products, it drives a more informed consumer base, which can demand higher quality and better enforcement of regulatory standards.

### ***Stakeholder Theory***

Edward Freeman's Stakeholder Theory, introduced in 1984, provides a comprehensive framework for organisations to consider the needs of all parties affected by their actions, not just shareholders. According to Freeman, stakeholders are all individuals or groups that influence or are influenced by an organisation's activities, including employees, customers, suppliers, regulators, and local communities. The theory argues that long-term organisational success is tied to how well these diverse stakeholders' interests are managed and balanced. Stakeholder Theory is particularly significant in the context of consumer safety and standardisation because it emphasises the interconnectedness of regulatory bodies, businesses, and consumers. For instance, when regulatory bodies like SON enforce product standards, they are not only fulfilling their mandate to protect public health but also ensuring that businesses remain competitive in global markets. By considering the interests of all stakeholders, organisations can build trust, which is critical in the market. In addressing substandard products, it becomes clear that all stakeholders, the government, manufacturers, consumers, and even civil society, must be involved in enforcing quality standards and

ensuring the availability of safe products. The theory emphasises the importance of transparency and accountability, suggesting that collaboration across sectors is crucial in achieving effective regulatory practices and fostering a culture of compliance.

### **Research Methodology**

#### ***Research Design***

This study **employed** a **quantitative research design** to evaluate public and industry compliance with the Standards Organisation of Nigeria's (SON) regulations for safety and national development in Abuja.

#### ***Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique***

The target audience for this study comprised residents of the Jabi area in Abuja, representing consumers impacted by SON's regulations, as well as employees of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria, tasked with enforcing standards across diverse industries. A stratified sampling technique was utilised to ensure a representative selection from each group within the target audience, namely the Jabi public and SON staff. The estimated population of the study area was 109,311. A total sample size of 383 was determined, calculated to provide sufficient statistical power and ensure accurate representation of the broader population.

#### **Data Collection Method**

**Primary data was collected** using a **survey** that **was distributed** to the target audience. The survey **included** structured Likert scale questions aimed at assessing awareness, compliance levels, and the implications of compliance for consumer safety and national development. **Secondary data was gathered** from **existing literature**, such as SON's regulatory reports, academic research, government publications, and related industry reports. This **supported** the primary data by providing context for understanding the current state of compliance and safety in Nigeria.

#### **Data Analysis**

The data **was analysed** using **statistical tables** and **descriptive analysis**. Statistical tables **summarised** quantitative data, providing clear insights into the level of compliance, awareness, and consumer safety concerns.

Descriptive analysis **was used** to interpret the survey results, identifying patterns and trends across the target groups.

#### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Table 1: How strongly do you agree that SON's regulatory enforcement plays a significant role in fostering compliance across various industries in Abuja?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	25	6.5%
Disagree	50	13.0%
Neutral	80	20.9%
Agree	120	31.3%
Strongly Agree	108	28.2%
Total	383	100%

*Survey: Field Survey, 2024*

The analysis of the data reveals a mixed but generally positive perception of SON's regulatory enforcement in fostering compliance across industries in Abuja. A combined total of 59.5% of respondents either agreed (31.3%) or strongly agreed (28.2%) that SON's enforcement plays a significant role in ensuring industry compliance. This suggests a strong belief in the importance of regulatory oversight for maintaining industry standards. However, there is a notable proportion of respondents who expressed scepticism, with 13.0% disagreeing and 6.5% strongly disagreeing, indicating that some individuals may question the effectiveness or impact of SON's enforcement. In addition, 20.9% of respondents were neutral, suggesting uncertainty or a lack of clear opinion on the matter.

**Table 2: How frequently do you observe industries in Abuja adhering to SON's regulations due to its enforcement efforts?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	40	10.5%
Rarely	60	15.7%
Sometimes	100	26.1%
Often	103	26.9%
Always	80	20.9%
Total	383	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The analysis of the data suggests that there is a varied frequency in the observed adherence to SON's regulations by industries in Abuja. A combined total of 26.2% of respondents (10.5% "Never" and 15.7% "Rarely") reported that they rarely or never observe industries complying with SON's regulations, indicating some concerns about the effectiveness of enforcement in ensuring consistent compliance. On the other hand, 26.1% of respondents observed compliance "Sometimes," while 26.9% noticed industries adhering to regulations "Often," reflecting a more positive view of SON's enforcement efforts. Additionally, 20.9% of respondents reported that industries always adhere to the regulations, indicating a significant portion of respondents who perceive frequent or consistent compliance.

**Table 3: How well do you think the public is informed about the importance of adhering to SON's regulations in Abuja?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very Poorly Informed	20	5.2%
Poorly Informed	60	15.7%
Neutral	100	26.1%
Well Informed	130	34.0%
Very Well Informed	73	19.1%
Total	383	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The analysis of the data reveals varying perceptions of public awareness regarding the importance of adhering to SON's regulations in Abuja. A significant 34.0% of respondents feel that the public is "Well Informed," while 19.1% believe they are "Very Well Informed," suggesting a relatively strong perception of public knowledge about SON's regulations. However, a substantial 26.1% of respondents expressed a neutral stance on the issue, indicating uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion about public awareness. On the other hand, 15.7% of respondents believe the public is "Poorly Informed," and 5.2% consider them to be "Very Poorly Informed," pointing to a notable portion of the population that may not fully understand the importance of compliance with SON's regulations. These findings highlight a mixed picture of public awareness, with a significant portion of respondents indicating a relatively high level of information, but also a considerable percentage suggesting room for improvement.

**Table 4: To what extent do industries in Abuja understand the significance of complying with SON's regulations?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Not at All	30	7.8%
To a Small Extent	60	15.7%
To a Moderate Extent	120	31.3%
To a Great Extent	105	27.4%
Completely	68	17.8%
Total	383	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The analysis of the data indicates that industries in Abuja have a moderate to high understanding of the significance of complying with SON's regulations. A substantial 31.3% of respondents believe that industries understand compliance "To a Moderate Extent," while 27.4% feel that the understanding is "To a Great Extent." This suggests that a significant portion of industries recognises the importance of adhering to SON's regulations. Furthermore, 17.8% of respondents indicated that industries understand

compliance “Completely,” indicating a strong understanding among a portion of the population. However, 15.7% of respondents feel that industries understand it “To a Small Extent,” and a smaller proportion of 7.8% believe that industries do not understand compliance “At All.” These findings reflect a generally positive outlook on the understanding of SON’s regulations within industries, with the majority of respondents acknowledging at least a moderate level of awareness. However, the presence of respondents who indicated limited understanding highlights an opportunity for further education and outreach to enhance compliance across all industries in Abuja.

**Table 5: How strongly do you agree that non-compliance with SON’s regulations leads to an increase in substandard products in Abuja?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	18	4.7%
Disagree	32	8.4%
Neutral	70	18.3%
Agree	130	34.0%
Strongly Agree	133	34.7%
Total	383	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The data reveals a strong consensus among respondents regarding the link between non-compliance with SON’s regulations and the increase in substandard products in Abuja. A significant 34.7% of respondents “strongly agree” with this statement, and another 34.0% “agree,” highlighting a clear recognition of the negative impact that regulatory non-compliance has on product quality. However, a smaller proportion of 18.3% of respondents remained neutral, which could indicate either a lack of direct experience with substandard products or uncertainty about the extent of the impact. On the other hand, only 8.4% of respondents disagreed with the statement, and just 4.7% “strongly disagree,” suggesting that only a small minority holds the view that non-compliance does not contribute to the prevalence of substandard goods.

**Table 6: How significant do you think the impact of non-compliance with SON's regulations is on consumer safety in Abuja?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Not Significant at All	10	2.6%
Slightly Significant	50	13.0%
Moderately Significant	100	26.1%
Very Significant	120	31.3%
Extremely Significant	103	26.9%
Total	383	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The data from this table indicates a widespread perception of the significant impact that non-compliance with SON's regulations has on consumer safety in Abuja. A substantial 31.3% of respondents consider the impact "very significant," while 26.9% believe it is "extremely significant." This strong agreement highlights the critical concern regarding how non-compliance can undermine consumer safety. Furthermore, 26.1% of respondents see the impact as "moderately significant," suggesting that while they acknowledge the problem, they may perceive the risks as somewhat less severe. On the other hand, only 13.0% of respondents regard the impact as "slightly significant," and a mere 2.6% feel that it is "not significant at all," pointing to a minimal minority that downplays the risks associated with non-compliance.

**Table 7: How strongly do you agree that compliance with SON's regulations positively affects consumer trust in Abuja?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Disagree	10	2.6%
Disagree	40	10.5%
Neutral	60	15.7%
Agree	120	31.3%
Strongly Agree	153	40.0%
Total	383	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The analysis highlights a strong consensus among respondents regarding the positive influence of compliance with SON's regulations on consumer trust in Abuja. A substantial majority agreed, reflecting a shared understanding that adherence to regulatory standards plays a critical role in building and maintaining consumer confidence. The prominent figures, 40.0%, strongly agreeing and 31.3%, agreeing, emphasise the perceived reliability and credibility that compliance fosters within the marketplace. However, the 15.7% neutrality suggests that a notable segment of respondents might not have observed a direct connection between compliance and consumer trust or may lack sufficient engagement to form a definitive opinion. On the other hand, the minority disagreeing (10.5%) or strongly disagreeing (2.6%) could represent those who believe other factors, such as product marketing or economic conditions, might outweigh the impact of regulatory adherence on consumer trust.



**Table 8: To what extent do you think compliance with SON's regulations contributes to national development in Abuja?**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Not at All	15	3.9%
To a Small Extent	35	9.1%
To a Moderate Extent	90	23.5%
To a Great Extent	120	31.3%
Completely	123	32.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2024*

The analysis reveals a strong consensus among respondents regarding the positive effect of compliance with SON's regulations on consumer trust in Abuja. A significant 40.0% strongly agree, and 31.3% agree that adherence to these regulations fosters consumer confidence, highlighting the widespread belief that regulatory compliance directly influences trust in the market. This is further supported by the relatively small proportion of respondents who disagreed (10.5%) or strongly disagreed (2.6%), indicating that most recognise the value of regulatory compliance in ensuring product quality and safety. However, 15.7% of respondents remained neutral, suggesting either a lack of direct experience or insufficient information to form a strong opinion on the matter. This neutrality points to the need for continued efforts in raising awareness about the benefits of compliance and its impact on consumer trust.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings indicated that SON's regulatory enforcement played a pivotal role in fostering compliance, with 59.5% of respondents (31.3% agreeing and 28.2% strongly agreeing) acknowledging its impact. This aligned with the principles of **Public Awareness Theory**, which posited that effective regulatory enforcement depended on visible and transparent actions that instil accountability. When industries perceive regulatory measures as consistent and fair, they are more likely to comply. However, 19.5% of

respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed highlighted the need for more robust enforcement mechanisms to ensure consistency across all sectors. From the perspective of **Stakeholder Theory**, SON functioned as a key mediator between industries and the public, ensuring alignment with the overarching goal of quality assurance. Industries, as primary stakeholders, recognised that compliance not only mitigated legal risks but also enhanced operational sustainability and public trust. A stronger collaborative framework involving industries, consumers, and SON could have amplified these benefits, fostering mutual accountability and shared progress.

Awareness levels appeared substantial, with 53.1% of respondents considering the public and industries as well-informed or very well-informed. However, the 20.9% who remained neutral and the 20.9% who viewed awareness as poor or very poor exposed knowledge gaps. **Public Awareness Theory** suggests that these gaps stemmed from ineffective communication strategies or insufficient outreach by SON. Raising awareness through targeted campaigns and interactive platforms would have strengthened understanding among less-informed segments. **Stakeholder Theory** emphasises the shared responsibility of SON, industries, and public advocates in promoting a widespread understanding of regulatory significance. Engaging community leaders, industry representatives, and media platforms could have enabled SON to disseminate critical information more effectively, bridging awareness gaps and cultivating a culture of compliance. Collaborative initiatives, such as industry seminars and public forums, were identified as particularly impactful.

The findings emphasise a strong consensus on the adverse consequences of non-compliance, with 68.7% of respondents (34.7% strongly agreeing and 34.0% agreeing) linking non-compliance to the proliferation of substandard products and compromised consumer safety. This supports **Public Awareness Theory**, which argued that insufficient awareness among stakeholders exacerbated these risks. Without a clear understanding of compliance importance, industries tended to prioritise short-term gains over long-term consumer safety. From the perspective of **Stakeholder Theory**, the repercussions of non-compliance extended throughout the entire ecosystem, impacting consumers, industry credibility, and the trustworthiness

of regulatory authorities. Addressing these issues requires collective action: industries need to prioritise adherence to standards, while SON is expected to intensify enforcement efforts and public education campaigns. Increased accountability mechanisms, such as publicising cases of non-compliance, could have deterred regulatory violations.

The data demonstrates that compliance significantly enhanced consumer trust, with 71.3% of respondents (40.0% strongly agreeing and 31.3% agreeing) affirming this relationship. **Public Awareness Theory** explained this by emphasising the visible impact of compliance on product quality and safety, which reinforces public confidence. When consumers observe consistent regulatory adherence, their trust in industries and regulators is strengthened. **Stakeholder Theory** posited that compliance transcended individual benefits, contributing to broader national development. Industries adhering to SON's regulations promoted market stability, drove economic growth, and supported the government's developmental objectives. For instance, ensuring product quality reduced waste, improved export opportunities, and fostered job creation, creating a virtuous cycle of progress. Strengthening this dynamic required SON to maintain transparency and accountability while involving industries and consumers as active participants in regulatory processes.

## **Conclusion**

This study evaluated the awareness of and compliance with the Standards Organisation of Nigeria's (SON) regulations among industries and the public, examining how awareness impacts adherence to standards and the role of SON's enforcement in promoting compliance. The research, framed by **Public Awareness Theory** and **Stakeholder Theory**, revealed significant awareness gaps within both the public and industries. While over half of the respondents showed familiarity with SON's standards, barriers to effective communication and outreach hindered broader public understanding. Industry compliance was also uneven, with resource limitations and insufficient collaboration between SON and industries identified as challenges. Non-compliance was linked to substandard products, posing risks to consumer safety, which further emphasised the need for increased public education and stricter enforcement. The study found that compliance positively contributed to consumer trust, supported local

industries, and promoted national development, aligning with the principles of **Stakeholder Theory**, which stresses the collective responsibility of all involved parties. To strengthen Nigeria's regulatory framework, the study recommended targeted awareness campaigns, improved enforcement mechanisms, and enhanced industry-government collaboration.

### **Recommendations**

- i. SON should strengthen its enforcement mechanisms by increasing the frequency of inspections and audits, particularly in high-risk sectors. It should conduct regular workshops and training to improve industry understanding of regulatory expectations. Publicising non-compliance instances can highlight the consequences of breaches, encouraging adherence to regulations across industries and enhancing overall industry standards.
- ii. SON should launch comprehensive awareness campaigns through multiple communication channels, including social media and traditional media, while tailoring the message for diverse demographic groups and ensuring the use of local languages. Collaborations with industry leaders and community representatives will help ensure clear, accessible, and relevant information is communicated to both industries and the public, fostering a broader understanding of SON's standards.
- iii. SON should prioritise consumer education campaigns to raise awareness of how to identify substandard products and counterfeit goods, particularly in critical sectors such as food and pharmaceuticals. Collaborating with the media and stakeholders to inform the public about the risks of non-compliant products and strengthening partnerships with law enforcement agencies will help deter non-compliance and ensure consumer safety.
- iv. SON should actively promote the benefits of compliance, emphasising its positive impact on product quality, exports, and job creation, which fosters industry commitment and supports national development. Collaborating with trade associations will help emphasise the long-term advantages of compliance, such as improved market stability and consumer trust. In addition, SON

should introduce recognition programmes and incentives for companies that consistently comply with regulations to encourage sustained commitment to quality standards and economic growth.

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