



The Effect of Health and Safety Rules on the Nigerian Construction Industry

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THE EFFECT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY RULES ON THE NIGERIAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the occupational health and safety rules in the Nigerian construction. The objective of the study is to assess the effect of rules on the performance of the Nigerian construction industry. This study adopts a questionnaire survey to elicit information from construction professionals. 45 responses received and fit for analysis. Percentile means chart and means score were used in analysed the data received and was appropriately ranked. The survey revealed that the level of awareness of the respondents about the health and safety act and its composition is 47% while education and training have the highest mean score of 3.73 as a method of improving safety practices. It also revealed that reduce the threat of legal action has the highest mean score of 3.91 as the effect of the health and safety rules. Its, therefore, suggested that all safety rules and regulations must be complied with and regulatory bodies must make the necessary effort to enforce the safety rules. It is also suggested that the government to continue updating all health and safety rules to meet with present challenges in the construction industry. This study concludes that excellent safety practices can improve the safety performance of the Nigerian construction industry.

Keywords: employees, workplace, safety, health and construction industry

INTRODUCTION

Rules are set up so that the rights of individuals are respected and accountabilities are satisfied [1]. Small groups incline to embrace ordinary rules, that are not legally binding whereas governments of a nation or states establish comprehensive rules, that can be enforced [2] [3]. The essence of the regulation is to ensure individuals in society live and perform under the set of standard rules [4]. The consequence of contravention of the rules is in the form of a sanction imposed by the government of a nation or states considers being proportionate with the gravity of the breach [5], [6]

Occupational health and safety rules imposed responsibilities on the organization to safeguard the health and safety of their personnel in the course of their duties as well as the

general public [7] [8] [9]. The health and safety rules also imposed responsibility on the employees to comply with these rules and ensure international best practices [10] [11] [12]. Therefore, there must be a collaboration between the employers and the employees concerning health and safety rules in the workplace [13] [14].

[15] highlighted that accident and injury rates in developing nations like Nigeria are high compared to Australia, the UK, and the US. This is due to poor health and safety culture among the building operatives in the Nigerian construction industry [16]. [17] revealed that different perceptions, behaviour, and actions displayed by construction employees lead to serious accidents on-site. This different cultural background has an impact on the construction safety climate. [18] elaborated that sufficient attention to these differences supports understanding of the different methods to prevent accidents. The construction industry in Nigeria is reasonably experiencing growth. Regrettably, enforcement of health and safety rules is not a prevailing activity in Nigeria [19]. Similarly, [20] opined that occupational health and safety legislation meant for the Nigerian construction sector is inadequate and does not impact health and safety in the industry. Hence, attributing to the high number of injuries and accidents in the construction sites.

The study aim is to assess the effect of health and safety rules on the Nigerian construction industry. The objectives of the study are: to access the level of awareness of safety rules and regulations in the Nigerian construction industry, to identify methods of improving safety practices in the Nigerian construction industry, and to examine the effect of health and rules on the Nigerian construction industry. The study focus on the effect of health and safety rules on the Nigerian construction industry. The study addresses the major project stakeholders in the construction industry. Which include Quantity surveyors, Architects, Engineers, Builders, and health and safety experts.

The population for the study was the construction professionals in the building industry from the federal capital territory, Abuja, Nigeria. The target respondents consisted of Quantity surveyors, Architects, Engineers, Builders, and Health and Safety Experts. A well-structured 60 questionnaires were administered for the collection of the data on safety awareness, methods of improving safety, and the effect of safety rules on the Nigerian construction industry. The method of improving safety practices and the effects of safety rules were identified from the literature and presented for the respondents to appraise on a 5-point Linker scale. The levels of significance were acknowledged by the extent of their mean scores, with the highest mean illustrates the most significant factor.

MAIN RESULTS

The results from the data analysis obtained in the study are presented. Out of 60 questionnaires that were distributed only 45 were completed and returned representing a 75% response rate. From results analyzed, Master has the highest percentage of 42.2% from the respondents' academic qualification, engineers top with 35.6% of the respondents under professional affiliation while 31.1% are Coren registered engineers

form the highest percentage of the respondent under professional registration body. 33.3% has the highest percentage of respondents. Furthermore, the percentage distribution of the respondents according to the awareness of the health and safety act and its compositions. 47% has moderate knowledge of health and safety rules, 33% has high, 13% very high, 5% low, and 2% very low knowledge health and safety rules.

Also, the result analyzed illustrates that violators of the act are not deterred by the penalty has the highest percentage of 33%, under the deficiency of the health and safety act as illustrated in figure 1. Equally, training and education rank the highest with a mean score of 3.73 as a method of improving safety. The reduction of Legal threats has the highest mean score of 3.91 of the effect of health and safety rules on the Nigerian construction industry as indicated in table 1.

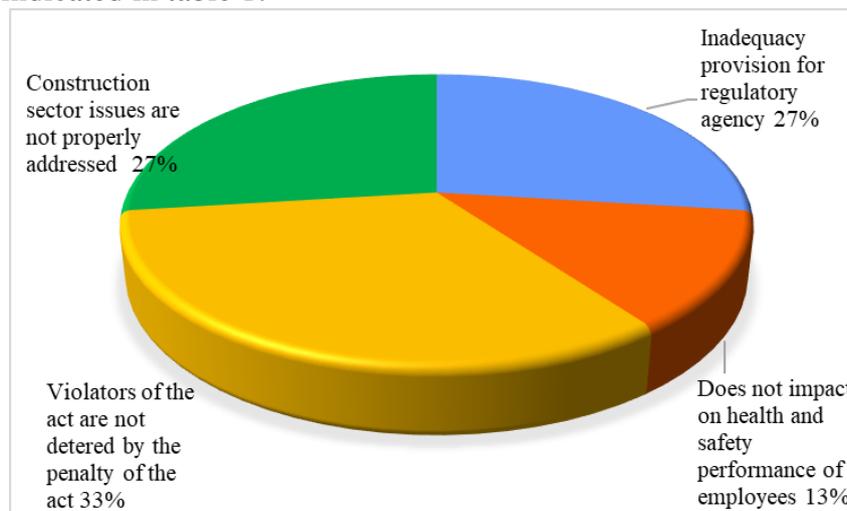


Figure 1 Deficiency of the Factories Act of 1990.

Table 1 The effect of health and safety rules on the Nigerian construction industry

S/no	Research Questions	SD (1)	D (2)	M (3)	A (4)	S A (5)	Total Response	Mean Score	Ranking
1	Reduced number of accidents	2	4	12	15	12	166	3.69	3
2	Reduced costs	1	8	8	23	5	158	3.51	5
3	Reduced risks	1	5	9	21	9	167	3.71	2
4	Increased reputation	1	5	12	18	9	164	3.64	4
5	Increased productivity	3	3	10	17	12	167	3.71	2
6	Reduced threat of legal action	2	6	12	14	14	176	3.91	1

The result of the survey illustrates that level of awareness of health and safety acts and its composition of the respondents has the highest 47% percent which is still below average. This aligns with the study by [21] that only 5% of the construction firms acquainted with the composition of the act. The survey shows that 33% of the respondents strongly agree that the violators of the act are not deterred by the penalty imposed as shown in figure 1. This inline with [15] which highlighted that numerous sections of the act need review. The result of the survey indicates that education and training have the highest mean score of 3.73 as shown in table 1. The result of the survey aligns with the position of [22] which highlighted that employees must have adequate training in health and safety matters, Survey of the respondents shows that the reduced threat of legal action has the highest mean score of 3.91 as the effect of health and safety rules. This was also the conclusion of [23] that the organization complied with the rule only to shun legal penalties.

CONCLUSION

Health and safety rules are essential for influencing safety practices in construction sites. Construction organizations must have a comprehensive knowledge of the statutory requirements that relate to their operations and ensure compliance. Resources must be made available by the organizations in the training and education of construction employees on health and safety rules so that they can aware of how their behaviour can affect themselves, co-employees and passerby, and the entire organization. Regular visitation of sites by the inspectorate officers to ensure compliance with health and safety rules. Health and safety rules must be continuously undergoing review to meet the challenges in the construction industry.

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