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COUNTRY CONTEXT-BASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING HEALTH AND SAFETY

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Using Nigeria as a case study, this study examines the Social, Political, Economic, Cultural and Religious (SPECR) contexts of developing countries towards unearthing and discussing the opportunities for improving Health and Safety (H&S). Previous research demonstrates the imperativeness of understanding the SPECR contexts of developing countries and the implications of practices, policies and laws that are not underpinned or based on a good understanding of the contexts. However, this has received little attention and the contexts-based opportunities for improving H&S remain unexamined. Through a critical review of literature, it was found that the contexts-based opportunities for improving H&S centre around social media platforms, unexplored potentials and undeveloped fields, the quest of Nigerians to embrace change, religion which teaches morals, community leadership where the leaders are able to command respect, the collectivist cultural dimension which emphasises affection, kinship and power relationship. While issues such as the sensitive nature of religion pose challenges, the study highlights SPECR characteristics, such as the collectivist cultural dimension, that policymakers and contractors should consider in developing policies and strategies towards improving H&S. Nevertheless, as the study is a theoretical piece of work, further empirical evidence on the subject is recommended.

Keywords: Culture, Developing countries, Health and Safety, Political, Social media.

INTRODUCTION

Many developing countries such as Nigeria adopt policies, standards, and methodologies from developed countries and this is profound in Health and Safety (H&S). For example, in Nigeria most of the H&S regulations or Acts originated from Britain or America (Idoro, 2011). The current Factories Act of 2004 has been adopted from the UK Factories Act of 1961 (Idoro, 2011). Nigerian contractors adopt and implement H&S regulations from Britain, for example, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 2007 or 2015 (Idoro, 2011; Umeokafor, 2017).

In adopting and implementing these policies, standards and methodologies, little attention in terms of H&S, is paid to the contextual environments of the countries where they are implemented (Kheni et al., 2010; Umeokafor and Windapo, 2016). By implication, they are

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developed in the contexts of the countries of origin. Consequently, in Nigeria, just like many developing countries, some adopted H&S policies and regulations are irrelevant and impracticable (Aniekwu, 2007), unenforceable by the H&S regulator, and compliance is at the discretion of the adopters (Idoro, 2011). One example of adopted but impracticable regulatory requirements is the client's duties in the CDM Regulations 2015 where, among many, the client 'must provide pre-construction information as soon as is practicable to every designer and contractor appointed, or being considered for appointment, to the project'. In countries where such regulations are unenforceable, clients are not obliged to comply. Hence, when designers and contractors engage in H&S, they are likely to lack adequate pre-construction information. This is where the H&S record of the Nigerian construction industry is very poor (Agbede et al., 2016; Windapo and Jegede, 2013). In particular, although Agbede et al. (2016) report on South West of Nigeria including Lagos state, only 15% of their 115 respondents claim that safety training has been provided to their managers/supervisors and only 13% review and update risk assessment. While Lagos state is noted as 'the major hub of construction activities in Nigeria' (Babatunde et al., 2010: 3), the finding is indicative at best and a little representation of reality at worst. Analogously, the findings of an older study, Idoro (2011: 168), indicate that in 2006, the best accident per worker rate was 2 accidents per 100 workers and the best 'injury per worker rate for that year was 5 injuries per 100 workers'.

According to authors (Kheni et al., 2010; Umeokafor, 2015), the solution to the H&S issues in developing countries lies in understanding and integrating the contexts of developing countries in H&S matters. This includes the structure, challenges and opportunities there in.

Integrating the social, political, economic, cultural and religious (SPECR) contexts in H&S has received little attention. For example, Umeokafor (2015) assesses the contextual influence on H&S practices, while Umeokafor and Windapo (2016) developed a tool, which integrates the management of contextual factors into H&S management in project life cycle. Furber et al. (2012) examine the socio-cultural motivators of community members to engage in hazardous construction activities. Other studies include Kheni (2008) and Kheni et al. (2010). However, the SPECR contexts-based opportunities for improving H&S remains unexamined.

In addressing the gap in knowledge, using Nigeria as a case study, the current study critically examines the SPECR contexts of a developing country towards unearthing, critically analysing and discussing the opportunities for improving H&S. This will offer optimism and encourage efforts at improving H&S, advance the understanding of the SPECR contexts of Nigeria including the potentials therein and its contributions to H&S, and draw attention to overlooked characteristics of the SPECR contexts of Nigeria. Academics, contractors, policymakers and community leaders with interest in H&S are likely to find it beneficial. For internal validity purposes, the current study is based on the SPECR context and Nigeria.

NIGERIA IN CONTEXT

Nigeria is on the western coast of Africa with a landmass of about 923, 768 sq. KM, six geopolitical zones (GZs)—North West, North East, North Central, South East, South South, and South West—; a population of about 190 million and about 500 ethnic groups. The main ethnic groups are Hausa (25.1%), Fulani (3.9%), Yoruba (21%), Igbo (18%), Ijaw (10%), Kanuri (4%), Ibibio (3.5%), Tiv (2.5%), and other groups are 12% (Worldatlas 2018). While the official language is English and Pidgin English is very common and widely spoken, there

are multiple languages, but Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are the main ones. While the exact distribution of religion is uncertain, according to Pew Forum (2010), as at 2009, of the population, 52% are Muslims, 46% are Christians, and the remaining 2% belong to other religions or none. This diversity explains the multiple cultures, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and interests. Since 1999, Nigeria has enjoyed democracy, after a few failed attempts.

H&S in Nigeria is emerging; the oil and gas industry remains ahead of other industries in health, safety and environment (cf. Windapo and Jegede, 2013). The Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment Inspectorate Division (FMLEID) oversees (including enforcing) the current H&S laws-the Factories Act 2004. They have offices in all the states of Nigeria and the Factory inspectors enforce the law (see Umeokafor 2017 for details). However, according to Dabup (2012) and Idoro (2011), Nigeria lacks adequate H&S laws and enforcement regime; the regulatory system is dysfunctional and fragmented-one of the key barriers to H&S. For instance, the Factories Act 2004 is riddled with limitations that include not covering the construction industry hence the adoption of regulations from other countries (Idoro, 2011; Umeokafor, 2017). A review of the Act shows that it does not cover all work activities such as Display Screen Equipment and has penalties as low as 1000 Naira (£2) for serious breaches such as non-reporting of accidents (Factories Act 2014: 51.4). This is a recipe for intentional breach of the Law, as the likelihood for prosecution or a fine is low. However, it is anticipated that the Labour, Safety, Health and Welfare Bill of 2012, which awaits the presidential assent, will address a lot of these limitations. The government pays little attention to H&S; the weak legal structure that is riddled with lengthy court cases hinders the little efforts of the FMLEID (Idubor and Osiamoje, 2013).

Conversely, there are efforts to improve H&S in Nigeria such as the voluntary adoption of H&S regulations from other countries by contractors (Idoro, 2011), the contribution of social actors, the growing literature on H&S, and the recently formed informal Nigerian branches of Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a critical systematic review of academic literature to explore the SPECR contexts-based opportunities for improving H&S in Nigeria. The literature search of keywords relevant on databases, EBSCOHost and Emeralds, showed 1760 papers of which many appeared more than once. The keywords are not limited to: 'context' and 'health and safety' and 'Nigeria'; 'Economic', AND 'health and safety' AND Nigeria'; 'Culture', AND 'health and safety' AND Nigeria'; 'Political' OR 'politics' AND 'Nigeria'; Religion' AND 'Nigeria'. Then, CIB W099 proceedings from 2010–2017 were also searched, producing two papers. In both cases, the titles and where possible the keywords were scrutinized for relevant papers. This produced 38 papers that the abstracts and conclusions were further scrutinised and five were selected. This was complemented with the citation approach—searching the reference lists of papers and books relevant to the topic for 'leads' to articles that can be used (Umeokafor *et al.*, 2014). This then added additional nine papers, hence a total of 14 academic papers informed the review. Then, Websites and government reports were also reviewed.

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural context

This is the situation in the country that relates to the people's way of life (Kheni, 2008). Although diversity is emphasised in Nigeria, it is of the collectivism national culture dimension (Hofstede, 2001). In a study of 72 countries, Hofstede (2001) found that West African (WA) countries including Nigeria have a low individualism index as against Western countries where it is high. The WA countries are also feminine societies hence characterised by affection—concern about the needs and interests of others (Darwish and Huber, 2003 Hofstede, 2001). The collectivism cultural dimension is characterised by the closer tie (Hofstede, 2014) and loyalty to the group, where group interest is prioritised over individual interests (Darwish and Huber, 2003; cf. Furber et al., 2012). The extended family style is an indispensable aspect of the culture (see Kheni 2008). The elders in the extended families are well respected in communities and help instill values and norms in younger people.

Consequently, the communities work with local councils or relevant authorities to set up laws (Nkonya et al., 2005). Evidence in Nkonya et al. (2005) shows that the level of compliance with such laws is higher. Also, collectivist views, including family values, have been found to determine contractors' engagement in H&S management in Ghana (Kheni, 2008; Kheni et al., 2010). Umeokafor (2015) postulates the same for H&S Nigeria but opines that some beliefs of Nigerians impact on the ability of the collectivism culture dimension to optimally drive H&S. Additionally, communal culture and local traditional laws have also been found to coerce poor safety practices in construction in Ghana (Furber et al., 2012). By implication, while the collectivism national cultural dimension of Nigeria is an opportunity for improving H&S, it requires the support of other factors including the opportunities covered in this study. Meanwhile, Dabup (2012) indicates the involvement of communities in Health, Safety and Environment in Nigeria, for example in the Niger Delta.

Furthermore, African cultures and traditions preach morals (Kheni, 2008), one of the principles of H&S; this presents opportunities for academics and community leaders to exploit if interested in H&S in terms of instilling values in students or younger people.

Social Context

This relates to the 'society and living together in an organised way' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). The media, including social media, in Nigeria is lively and with significant contributions to Africa (Uanikhehi, 2017; Uzuegbunam, 2015). Each of the 36 states runs at least a TV and radio station. Access to international TV stations is now commonplace. Nigerians are well informed and active on the use of social media (Uzuegbunam, 2015) hence have a significant level of access to the Internet. Uanikhehi (2017) shows that there are 22 million monthly users of Facebook and 10 million log in daily on a mobile device.

Social media has become a very powerful tool for driving changes, discussions, election campaign platforms, and serves as a voice for the masses irrespective of social class (Uzuegbunam, 2015). Uzuegbunam (2015) offers a treatise on this subject providing examples which include how Nigerian youths have used social media to initiate the call for a reduction in the pump price of petrol. A similar event is 'a call to abolish Special Anti Robbery Squad'. As a result, Umeokafor (2017) recommends the use of social media as a means of gathering

and passing H&S information in Nigeria, hence an opportunity. Also, the media present opportunities, but the onus is on the Nigerian youths to drive their involvement.

The private contribution of individuals (such as qualified workers and managers, who received proper H&S education) and communities to H&S in the midst of the lack of governmental attention is also an opportunity. The voluntary adoption of H&S regulations by contractors (Idoro, 2011) and the informal IOSH branch noted elsewhere in this paper are also examples. These show the unexplored potentials, undeveloped fields and the quest to embrace change. It also calls for state-supported policies and suggests the possibility of the general acceptance of state-supported H&S improvement measures if introduced.

Political context

This is the situation within which the 'activities of the government, members of law-making organisations or people who try to influence how a country is governed' exists (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). Nigeria is a federal state with three branches of government, executive, legislative and judicial arms; it operates a democratic system. Like most African countries, it is 'experiencing leadership crisis at both national and organisational level' and political level (Dabup, 2012: 79). Authors demonstrate that politicians or people in the higher echelon of power lack accountability and transparency; the government is corrupt; the leaders have failed to effectively guide the countries to economic and industrial growth (Angaye and Gwilliam, 2008; Dabup, 2012). According to Dabup (2012), the political system, government policies and attitudes influence decisions making and strategies in organisations, including H&S.

In the midst of all in the preceding paragraph, power relationship which is a challenge to H&S in Nigeria (Okojie, 2010) has been found to drive H&S, in other context hence an opportunity (Umeokafor, 2017). Power relationship in this context is the ability of people to control or influence others. Many companies are owned by the people in the high echelon of the society (Okojie, 2010) hence resist any opposition in the country including the enforcement of H&S; however, some of them drive H&S to protect their status in the society (Umeokafor, 2015), but the impact is likely to vary (cf. Angaye and Gwilliam, 2008). The social and cultural status of people determine how they are treated in the society and the level of respect (Kheni, 2008).

Understandably, while the democratic process needs improvement, the ability of politicians and policymakers to introduce and pass bills towards reforms in Nigeria and create committees that oversee and control various matters remains an opportunity to improve H&S. It can be argued that if this is the case, then why is the Labour, Safety, Health and Welfare Bill of 2012 still awaiting the presidential assent as at 2018? Possible answers include the lack of enforcement and implementation culture (Umeokafor, 2017), corruption, lack of political 'will' and safety culture (Idubor and Osiamoje, 2013). The point here is that with the current democratic regime and process, H&S has more opportunities than in the military regimes. The influence of the international community, including transferring better H&S cultures, advising, encouraging or coercing Nigeria to improve H&S standards and practices, is likely to be easier and more welcomed in a democratic setting.

Economic Context

This is conceptualised as the situation in a country that relate to money, trade, industry and profit making (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). Although the recent fall in oil prices impacted on

the Nigerian economy in 2016, it remains the largest in Africa and the 27th in the world (Nordeatrade, 2017). The GDP contracted 1.58% in 2016, the worst in the past 2 decades (Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NNBS), 2018; Nordeatrade, 2017). However, according to NNBS (2018), in 2017, the GDP recorded an annual growth of 0.83% higher by 2.42% than -1.58% in 2016. The construction sector contributed 3.77% in 2017 and 3.55% in 2016 and the telecommunication and communication sectors including music and movie industries contracted from 11.57% in 2016 to 11.35% in 2017.

The above shows the economic growth in Nigeria, but the state of H&S therein is evidence that the economy is yet to benefit from the H&S sector because it is unharnessed, a missed opportunity that is an additional source of revenue and contribution to the GDP. For example, if harnessed, the H&S sector will provide employment opportunities, result in the development of equipment, training and other services. In turn, this will generate revenue, increase productivity and save lives. A similar situation is recorded in the telecommunication and communication sectors including music and movie industries which until recently has not been covered by GDP reports, as its contribution was unrecognised. However, with the introduction of the Global System for Mobile communication and the governmental and private investors involvement in the music and movie industries, their products and services are exported and of international standards, providing a platform for integration with international experts. Currently, the contribution of the industry to the GDP is significant.

Religious context

Sulaiman (2016) argues that while there is no universally accepted definition for religion, it means a link or relationship between man and a greater being. Religion does no support wastage including damage to plant and equipment and injuries to persons (Smallwood, 2002). Eckhardt (2001) discusses moral reasons for H&S including quoting a passage in the Bible, Deuteronomy 22:8, which suggests or advises the provision of a safe building that considers all occupants. Nigeria is a highly religious nation (Pew Forum, 2010), and as morality is one of the principles of religion and determines behaviours (Smallwood, 2002), it is logical to conclude that religion presents opportunities for improving H&S. This includes involving religious leaders and incorporating religious arguments for H&S in relevant courses or modules. Pukenis (2014) reports similar steps where religious leaders have been invited to tackle social issues. Conversely, the sensitive nature of religion pose problems such as resistance from religious leaders (Sulaiman, 2016), but religious leaders have the moral obligation to support what will save lives—a possible argument to get them involved.

Table 1 presents the summary of the SPECR contexts-based opportunities for improving H&S. They also have implications for improving other project indicators such as time, cost, and user satisfaction, but the focus of this study is how they can improve H&S in developing countries. Some characteristics of the contexts interrelate to become relevant opportunities.

Contexts	SPECR Characteristics
Social	Freedom of speech and press. High level of access to the Internet. Ability of youths to initiate changes, discussion etc through Social media Social media, a platform for discussion and social mobilization. Private contributions of individuals, social actors, and communities. Unexplored potential and undeveloped field. The quest of Nigerians to embrace change.
Cultural	Leadership features and ability of community leaders to command respect Moral codes in cultures. Characteristics of the collectivism cultural dimension. Affection attributes of the feminine society.
Political	Ability of people to control or influence people in the society—Power relationship. The features of democracy, which has been absent during the military regimes. Points of attraction for the international community.
Economic	Potential of the large economy of Nigeria. Source of revenue through H&S. Source of employment, business. Possible reduction in antisocial behaviours and crime. Opportunities for exports. Potential for raising standards of services. Platform for integration with international counterparts.
Religion	Moral stance of religion. High level of religiousness of Nigerians.

Table 1: Summary of social, political, economic, cultural and religious contexts-based opportunities for improving H&S. Source: Authors' elaboration

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Using Nigeria as a case, the study identified and discussed social, political, economic, cultural and religious contexts-based opportunities for improving H&S. The systematic critical review of literature shows that there are voluntary contributions of social actors, professional institutions, communities, and contractors in driving H&S. While this calls for state-supported policies, it suggests the likelihood of its general acceptance if introduced. While the ability to control or influence people in the society-Power relationship-is a challenge to H&S, it is also an opportunity. The features of democracy which have been absent during the military regimes, the potentials of the large economy of Nigeria and the potential contributions H&S to the economy of Nigeria are also opportunities that policymakers, investors and even the government should consider. The social media, which has been an avenue for driving social change and a platform for discussing issues, also remains a key opportunity, which is supported by the quest of Nigerians to embrace change. While the above two points are systematically focussed but the latter point is also individual behaviour-focussed, some opportunities and recommendations can be mainly individually behaviour-focussed. For example, although religion is sensitive, as Nigerians are highly religious and religion teaches morals, this is an opportunity that all, including academics, should explore. Indeed, religious principles could underpin H&S related lectures in schools; academics could include this in the curricula. Emphatically, the recommendations should not be misconstrued as oversimplifying complex phenomena. Importantly, some features of SPECR contexts are interrelated, complementing the features and abilities of each other to become opportunities. The identified opportunities can also improve other project indicators such as cost and quality. The findings suggest various hypotheses of which one is that H&S policies and strategies would be practical and more acceptable in the society resulting in improved H&S if the opportunities in Table 1 are exploited in the development of H&S policies and strategies. Another hypothesis, H&S knowledge, attitude and culture would improve if religious and tradition-supported moral teachings are embedded in H&S courses/lessons. It is also possible to hypothesise that if social media platforms are used, governmental involvement in H&S is likely to increase. While the study is limited to the literature review and authors' views, a survey where, for example, these hypotheses are tested is recommended.

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