

An Analytical Study of NAFDAC's Influence on the Safety and Market Dynamics of *Aporo-Epa Ijebu* in South-West Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study examines National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control (NAFDAC) with particular reference to the role of NAFDAC established by Decree 15 of 1993 (as amended) and charged with responsibility to control and regulate the manufacture, importation, advertisement, sales and use of food, drugs, chemicals, cosmetics, detergents, medical devices and all drinks with the view of protecting and safeguarding the citizens against consumption of hazardous and uncertified food, drugs and other related products. The study analyses primary data against the background of the objective. Evidence available indicates that consumer protection in Nigeria like most less developed countries remained at the lowest ebb. The study observed that although NAFDAC recognized the right of consumers but not specifically provide avenue on how these rights should be enforced as they are merely implied and subsumed with the function of the agency. Meanwhile, consumers' awareness of their protection laws is low, even in case of obvious infringement. This implies that NAFDAC should be more proactive in safeguarding the welfare of Nigerians. The study employed Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) to elicit information from illiterates that more vulnerable while secondary data are sourced from textbooks, journals, publications and internet facilities.*

Keywords: Consumer, Education, NAFDAC, Food, Drugs, Aporo-IpaIjebu.

INTRODUCTION

It is undisputed that marketing has made remarkable progress in the development of public policy in all areas of human activities including consumption for safety and welfare of consumers, government of every nation established regulatory bodies to make policies, regulations and enforce such regulations for the interest of general public (Egike, Ikechi and

Ozo, 2017). Such established regulatory bodies aim at controlling marketing practice in order to stop unethical marketing practice and as well improve the welfare of citizens. Ekanem (2011) maintains that consumptions are the essence of production of goods and services, production would be worthless if the products produced are not consumed.

The production, distribution and consumption of low quality products constitute and consumption of low quality product constitute a critical danger to not only the wellbeing of Nigerians but also can mar sustainable socio- economic development of country. When manufacturing companies are not regulated and controlled such that products manufactured are substandard and low quality, the consequential damage on health of the people can be hazardous. For instance, The World Health Organization has identified the trade of substandard and counterfeit medications as a contributing factor to high rate of morbidity and mortality as well as low public trust in the global health system. According to reports consumers of sub pour and counterfeit medications have had side effects that include harm, problems, paralysis, impairment and instability to respond to treatment in some cases, even death (WHO,2006).

However, government establish plans, agencies, parastals, policies and programmes within their ministries to function more efficiently in managing natural catastrophes, safeguarding public health, properties and environment and defending economies. The national food safety policy is one of the regulatory bodies in Nigeria is the National Agency for Food Drugs Administration and control (NAFDAC). NAFDAC was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria on January 1, 1993 by Decree No15 (as amended) to control and regulate the manufacture, importation, distribution, advertisement, sales and use of food, drugs, cosmetics, chemicals, detergents, medical devices and all drinks. Under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, NAFDAC Act. Cap No1 was enacted into law of the federation in February 2004. It was onus on the NAFDAC to look after the safety of human consumption and educating the public about the need to identify and purchasing only products that are permitted for sales and consumption. The federal government of Nigeria established the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration control (NAFDAC) in accordance with international food safety policy which transcends national boundaries. A careful review of literature on various activities of NAFDAC by scholars; previous studies focused on packaged water using an entirely scientific approach. Its microbiological and physic-chemical quality and not the regulatory aspect and others. But this study aimed at conducting a rapid need assessment of the existing regulatory system for locally made herb Aporo-EpaIjebu with a view of proffering recommendations that would enhance its successful regulations and ultimately improved public health outcomes in the country at large.

Conceptual Clarifications

Consumer could be described as an individual who decide and make choices by payment on goods and services that available for sales to satisfy his/her heart desire while consumer behavior according to Meyer and Machwins (2010) explain consumer behavior as the totality of consumers decisions with respect to the acquisition and disposition of goods, services, activities, experiences, people consumer education is concerned with the skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding required for living in a giving society. It helps individuals to understand their role in marketplace, give them broader view of the economic system and an understanding of the needs of both themselves and others (Egeke and Ejrihugha, 2020). Furthermore, it aims to develop an awareness of the right and responsibilities of consumers, the influence affecting consumer decision and the wider implication of those decisions (Ukpore, 2006).

National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration Control (NAFDAC) is a parastatal of the Federal Ministries of health. It was established by Decree No.20 of 1993 and later amended by decree No. 20 Of 1999. Under the administration of President OlusegunObasanjo, NAFDAC Act. Cap No.1 was enacted into the laws of the federation in Febuary, 2004. NAFDAC's mission is to guarantee that food and drugs distributed and consumed in Nigeria meet minimum quality standards necessary for a healthy lifestyle. In order to regulate and control quality standards for locally manufactured and imported foods, drugs, cosmentics, medical devices, chemicals, detergents that are distributed and consumed thropughout the nation. The establishment and operation of NAFDAC account for all companies that produce and distribute medications and food in Nigeria to apply for and receive NAFDAC approval stating that their products are safe for human consumption. Admittedly, NAFDAC disseminates the clearance details to the wider public through the registration number assigned to each food and medicines. NAFDAC also send the approved information to the general public by the registration number given to these food and drugs companies to include in the information they communicate on their products label.

Moreover, NAFDAC implements a phone-in programme that gives the general public the chance to ask questions and become better informed. The agency also use radio and television commercials, as well as jingles to inform the public about the importance of exercising caution when making purchases of food and medication related goods. Furthermore, NAFDAC offers information publications to the general populations including leaflet, journals, bulletins and pamphlets that include technical information (Omojokun, 2013).

Other strategies put in place by NAFDAC to eradicating fake drug and hazardous consumable goods from Nigeria markets, include;

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

- Streamlining and strict enforcement of registration guidelines and modernization of fake regulatory processes.
- Stopping the importation of fake drug to Nigeria at source (countries of productions)
- Beefing up surveillance at the ports of entry.
- Mooping up what is already in circulation
- Monitoring Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) of local manufacturers and Pharmaceutical Group of Nigeria.

The major focus of NAFDAC is to eradicate counterfeit drugs from Nigeria society without taking into consideration the locally made herbs that are in circulation that could be more injurious to health even more than counterfeit drugs. Counterfeit drugs according to WHO (2006) are medicine that have been purposefully and fraudulently mislabeled with respect to identify and /or source. Products having the correct or incorrect components insufficiently active substances, phony packages or both might be considered counterfeit. Counterfeiting can also apply to genuine and branded goods. As a result, drugs counterfeiting has been recognized as a significant wealth concern that has spread throughout the world and is growing every day, with numerous new cases being recorded (Akinyandenui, 2015). On the other hand, it has been observed globally that counterfeit medications constitute an organized crime that brings in large sum of money for offenders. A poll states that criminals have found that drug counterfeiting is relatively low risk and lucrative financially in many parts of the world. Consequently, the focus of organized crime has shifted from handling weapons to transporting counterfeit drugs (Akinyuli, 2005)

Conceptualizing ‘Aporo-Epaljebu’. This is one of the popular locally made herbs circulating in Nigeria societies from old time past. Researcher claimed that over fifty (50) years that he was born, he grew up to know the circulation of this herb (drug) and highly patronized by villagers. It is observed that this herbs (drug) is called different names depending on the environment where it is sold such as; ‘Aporo-Epa’, ‘Olopa-mujedi’ (that is pile arrester) and others. The concern of this study and what obviously observable in the herb (drug) are, no NAFDAC Reg.No, no dosage, no expiring date. And it meant to cure all ailments these include; piles, stomach ache, menstrual pains, snakes bite, scorpion bite, wounds, romantic and others. Ironically, the methods of application are the same. One tea spoon with hot pap recist snake or scorpion bite and wounds that the contents, needs to be applied on the exact spot. Findings further revealed that the compositions consist the following ingredients as follows; lemon, allum, ehaco (of which wood nobody knows) and boil water. The distribution is done by the producers and with the help of sales boy or girl

moving from house to house, street to street and community to community container is usually bottles with label of name of producer wrapped around the bottles.

Instruction; verbal information on usage is passed to clients by customers by either vendors or producers.

Albert, though quiet challenging times, the present NAFDAC has introduced significant progress in seeing to the effective actualization of its mandate on food, drugs and other consumable related to aforementioned through the provisions of GON Decree 19 of 1993 and its accompanying guidelines, no food or drugs items may be imported, advertised sold or distributed in Nigeria unless it has been registered by NAFDAC. The current study aimed at conducting a rapid needs assessment of the existing regulatory system for locally made herb ‘Aporo-Epaljebu’ with a view of proffering recommendations that would enhance NAFDAC successful regulations and ultimately improved public health outcomes in the country at large.

Theoretical Framework

The Quality Assurance Theory (QAT) is an important framework within manufacturing, particularly in industries that involve in the production and manufacturing of food, drugs, cosmetics, chemicals and related consumables. QAT is rooted in principles that prioritize the development processes and final output it emphasizes customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and adherence to the established norms and regulations (Garvin, 1987). This step explores the theoretical undermining of QAT and highlight how its principles apply to the role of the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration Control (NAFDAC) in ensuring the quality of food and drugs, within the Nigeria manufacturing industries.

Quality Assurance (QA) refers to the systematic processes implemented to ensure the products of services meet predefined standards and specifications (Furan and Goldfrey, 1998). The theory builds on the foundation ‘Total Quality management (TQM)’ which posits that every stage of production should be monitored and controlled to maintain quality from the initial design phase through to final delivery (Derring, 1986). The primary goal of QA is to enhance the reliability products and durability of products by variability in production, minimizing defects and ensuring conformity to standards (Feigenbaum, 1991). The theory includes multiple key components such as

- Prevention over detention: QA focuses on preventing defects rather than identifying and fixing them after production.
- Continuous improvement: The idea of ‘Kaizen’ encourages ongoing improvement in processes making production more efficient and reliable over time (Imari, 1986).

- Customer focus: QA is designed to meet or exceed customer expectations aiming to enhance customer satisfaction by delivering quality (Crosby, 1979).
- Adherence to standards: Compliance with the national standards is a core tenet of QA which is where organization like NAFDAC play a critical role in the Nigerian context.

These principles are highly relevant to the regulation of production and consumption of food, drugs, cosmetics, chemical, and detergents, medical devices that are distributed and consumed throughout the nation directly affects the safety and welfare of citizenry. In Nigeria, NAFDAC enforces national standards for such consumables foods ensuring that both manufacturers and consumers adhere to quality benchmarks.

Historically, the growth in manufacturing output has been a key element in the successful transformation of most economies that have seen sustained rises with their per capital income. In most African, performance in this area has been poor in the last decades. The lack of high quality data constitutes a major impediment for rigorous policy relevant researcher on African industry and the majority of previous economic research on Africa has therefore been based on aggregate date. Opalura et al (2010) opine that the manufacturing sector is a leading sector in many respects, it is an avenue for increasing productivity in relation to import substitution and export expansion, creating foreign earning capacity, raising employment, promoting the growth of investment at a faster rate than any other sector of the economy as well as wider and more efficient among different sectors. In another dimension, Obasan and Adeniran (2010) argue that when industrialization is compared to agriculture, the manufacturing sector offer special opportunities for capital accumulation. They explained that capital accumulation can be more easily realized in spatially concentrated manufacturing than in spatially dispersed agriculture. They noted further, that the contribution of the manufacturing industries in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized when considering its employment potentials and financial impacts on the economy. Apart from its role of building ground for development by laying solid foundation for the economy, and also serves as important substitution industry and provide ready market for intermediate goods.

METHODOLOGY

Using oral interview method, official of NAFDAC, the sole regulatory agency for food and drugs and all other consumables products was approached for information relating to their institutional capabilities, manufacturers functions and coping capabilities given the space of multitude products they regulate, adequacy of self-transparency and integrity concerns their approach to regulation and surveillance.

Simple structure questionnaires were used to interview randomly related resident of the community to establish the perceptions of the people with respect to; Aporo-Epa Ijebu' that

has been in existence and circulated for so long. For consumers of ‘Aporo-EpaIjebu’, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) were conducted in eight centers. This in view to gather information about their trust in the herb especially effectiveness and genuineness of the herb. Their awareness of regulation on food, drugs and drinks and whether the producers of ‘Aporo-Epa Ijebu’ adhere to stipulated laws against the production of such product before sales.

During the study, questionnaires were administered to member of households using judgmental convenience technique because of the characteristics of the study population. During the collation of the data, the possibility of bias owing to political dissatisfaction of respondents to the government in power was not ruled out. In such situation, the socially desirable option generally tilts towards supporting the masses and opposing the government. According Wiseman (1972), response bias is likely to be a problem in personal interviews whenever the question beings asked is one for which there exists a socially undesirable response.

However, to ensure validation of such claims, verification of the responses was done by actually visiting mentioned locations referred to during the course of the interviews. As cited by previous studies (Tunner et al, 1992; Aquillino, 1994). Another option to minimize issue socially desired outcomes would have been to use for physical presence of the interviewer for example in explanation and often times, interpretation in local dialect was thus warranted of course, this is necessary while dealing with rural dwellers that majority are illiterate. Summarily put the combination of different methods (interviews, observation and questionnaire) used with respondents in the study gave a more accurate picture and according to Paune (1964) tends to produce results more efficiently than one method alone could do.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The core issues identified from the collated information from Aporo-EpaIjebu producers, civil society, consumer protection groups, especially NAFDAC and the rural dwellers that are more vulnerable.

It was observed during the study that the regulatory agency approach has largely been reactive often focusing on the products that are usually display and sell in the pharmaceuticals stores such as food, drugs, drinks, chemicals, cosmetics and medical devices. According to NAFDAC official interviewed that their mandate did not extend to locally produced herbs like ‘Aporo-Epaijebu’ and others. By implications, the limited mandate of NAFDAC that did not cover regulating the production of different herbal mixture in circulation that could be so injurious to the health of Nigerian populace.

Majority of the civil society groups responses relate to the fact that the concentration of NAFDAC is centered on drugs usually found in the pharmaceutical stores, especially the

imported ones while less emphasis is placed on those manufactured within the country with the exception of packaged pure water that are forced to register and adhere to regulations guiding their production.

From Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) centers; consumers have different opinion about the production and consumption of ‘AporoEpaIjebu;. At Odeowo center in Ilesa, Osun State. Mr. Ajayi claimed that he has been taking Aporo-EpaIjebu when he was a child and it has been helping them to solve minor ailments such as stomach ache and piles without any negative reaction. But Mrs. Ajomole worried about the herb not having expiring date, that consumers buy and keep for so long until the need arise. Another FGDs center at Irele-Ekiti, Okanlawon remarked that the herb was no longer pure and effective like those one they took in olden days. Mr. Okiki at Ilarmokin, Ondo State claimed that government should not involve or control the production of ‘Aporo_EpaIjebu’ because this will definitely influence the price to go up further that the price is relatively cheap and affordable compare to medications in pharmaceutical stores.

Mr. Adigun in Odo-ona, Ibadan Oyo State remarked that no serious parents will do without having at least a bottle of ‘Aporo-EpaIjebu’ in his/her custody because it serves as first-aid to every family in Yoruba land. Adediwura in the same center revealed that the herb is always available and no need of traveling miles before you get it, the producers and suppliers move from house to house to sell.

Interviews with the producer of aporo-Epa Ijebu revealed that the production processes did not require certain level of educational attainment that most of them (producers) learnt it from their parents. Another respondent comment that it has been a dependable and reliable source of income to the producers, further that the production and sales of Aporo-EpaIjebu provide development for both the producers and the sales boys and girls. Revealed in the study, the producers of Aporo-EpaIjebu herb claimed that NAFDAC known them but as regulatory body for pure water and other drugs.

It is of note that NAFDAC needs to extend the scope of their regulation to cover the production and consumption of herbs like this because it is consuming and not apply, it goes in through the mouth to stomach and it can affect organs in the stomach since it has no dosage. A very large number of Nigeria citizens patronize this kind herbs. A final yet important note is the recognition of the fact that locally manufactured herbs like ‘Aporo-EpaIjebu’ have led many Nigerians to early grave because there is no regulation guiding their activities. Surprisingly, enough all these products are advertised on radio, television even on social media without caution. In most of their advertisement, they claimed that one herb can cure one thousand ailments and they are relatively cheap compared to orthodox medicines that are and met for

only one ailment. It is unfortunate many innocent lives have lost in the process of taking these locally manufactured herbs.

CONCLUSION

The task of ensuring quality service delivery in Nigerian manufacturing industry through routine inspection, awareness, programs, product inspection, and registration, adequate enforcement of quality control towards production of quality drug, food, drinks and others are done by NAFDAC. However, the agency is still found wanting in some areas such as, adequate enforcement of quality control, high cost of good quality drugs, non-professional in drug production, inadequate funding, and limit scope of work. Opportunities still exist for improvement in the current regulatory scheme to broaden their institutional capacity to cover the regulation of production and consumption of locally made herbs like Aporo-Epaljebu that is very common and circulated widely in the societies

Recommendations

The suggested recommendations if suitably adopted promise great rewards in the effective regulation of the locally manufactured herbs including 'Aporo-Epaljebu'. National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration Control (NAFDAC) saddled with responsibility of regulating food and drugs, cosmetics, chemicals, medical devices and drinks should extend the coverage of monitoring and surveillance to production and sales of a product like this. Although, it is not part of drugs that is subjected to physicians' recommendation whether is sold in the pharmaceutical stores but produced and consumed by Nigerians that deserves to be protected against hazard.

There is need to fortify daily or weekly in- house total coliform monitoring on finished 'Aporo-Epaljebu' products through collaborative effort with competent research laboratories in the nation for thorough scrutiny of the ingredient in composition of 'Aporo-Epaljebu' whether it is injurious and hazardous to human health.

NAFDAC should work in collaboration with other independent research agencies, manufacturers or producers of Aporo-Epaljebu should be subjected to regular, unannounced inspection to ensure compliance with the regulatory law (if eventually included in the NAFDAC's coverage).

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