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Safety Literacy and Societal Well-Being: A Case Study of Ibadan North Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This research examines safety literacy in the particular setting of the Ibadan North Local Government Area in Nigeria. It does so by providing a thorough analysis of current levels, contextual and cultural influences, the relationship to societal well-being, and the identification of obstacles to improvement. Utilizing a descriptive survey design approach and a stratified random sampling, the study measures safety literacy by means of quantitative evaluations of understanding and awareness. It examines how context and culture affect people's understanding of safety, highlighting the importance of culturally appropriate safety instruction. The study reveals a high level of safety literacy, cultural and contextual factors emerge as crucial determinants, shaping safety practices based on local beliefs, practices, and norms. The observed correlation between safety literacy and societal well-being underscores the profound influence of informed safety practices on community health, economic stability, social cohesion, and collective responsibility. Nonetheless, the study points out several obstacles that stand in the way of enhancing safety literacy, such as restricted information availability, difficulties with language, and cultural resistance. These obstacles highlight the need for focused interventions to address particular issues impeding the community's efforts to improve safety literacy.*

KEY WORDS*:* safety literacy, societal well-being, Ibadan north local government, public health, health literacy, Nigeria, safety measures.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of safety literacy has drawn a lot of attention lately as societies all over the world struggle to address the complex issues raised by safety concerns. The capacity to comprehend, evaluate, and react appropriately to information pertaining to safety, known as safety literacy, is one of the key factors influencing community well-being. Durand and Carpenter (2014) opined that safety literacy includes the information, abilities, and mindset required to recognize, evaluate, and control risks to help prevent mishaps and unfavorable outcomes. Iakovaki and

Valero (2019) also defined safety literacy as the capacity to comprehend, assess, and apply safety-related knowledge in a particular setting, encouraging a safety-conscious culture and well-informed decision-making.

Literature on safety literacy emphasizes how important it is for promoting a safety-conscious culture in local communities. For example, Zarcadoolas Pleasant and Greer (2005) highlight the significance of health and safety literacy in enabling people to make knowledgeable decisions regarding their health and welfare. According to the study, a lack of knowledge might result from inadequate safety literacy and raise one's risk of accidents, health risks, and other safety-related problems. The interpretative and contextual components of safety literacy are also highlighted by Iakovaki and Valero (2019), who contend that people should be able to use safety information appropriately in the context of their own environment.

The work of Oyekale (2022) illuminates the difficulties metropolitan communities have in maintaining safety and well-being in the Nigerian context. The fast population expansion in urban areas, such as Ibadan North, is putting a pressure on the infrastructure and services that are now in place. Oyekale's research highlights the necessity of focused interventions aimed at improving safety literacy in urban environments like these, as a deficiency of knowledge on safety protocols might worsen pre-existing hazards.

Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa, faces a wide range of difficulties that affect the security and welfare of its people. Growing urbanization, poor infrastructure, and socio-economic inequality produce a complicated environment where safety issues can appear in many ways. Ibadan North offers a fascinating case study for comprehending the relationships between safety literacy and social well-being because it is a microcosm of these larger problems.

In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations emphasize how crucial safety is to achieving overall social well-being. Goal 3 acknowledges the connection between safety and health, emphasizing the promotion of well-being for everyone while guaranteeing healthy lifestyles. By examining the local dynamics of safety literacy and its effects on the well-being of the people living in Ibadan North local government area of Oyo state in Nigeria, this study is in line with the worldwide commitment to achieve these goals.

Statement of the Problem

Developing nations of the world are known to face a multitude of safety issues brought on by increasing urbanization, poor infrastructure, and socio-economic inequality. The literature that has already been written, including the works of Zarcadoolas, Pleasant and Greer (2005), Oyekale (2022), and others, emphasizes the significance of safety literacy in promoting societal well-being; however, there is a critical knowledge gap regarding the particular dynamics within Nigeria's distinct national context. Prior researches offer insightful information about safety literacy at the international and national levels, but it ignores the specific nuances that may help or impede the application of safety knowledge in this community.

The existing body of literature does not thoroughly examine the ways in which safety outcomes and the general well-being of the people living in Ibadan North local government area of Oyo

state, Nigeria are directly impacted by safety literacy, or the lack of it. By performing an extensive analysis of safety literacy within the framework of the local government area, this study aims to close this gap. In doing so, it hopes to offer nuanced insights into the particular difficulties, knowledge gaps, and cultural elements that might affect safety literacy. This will contribute important data to support focused interventions and policies that can improve community safety practices and awareness. It is anticipated that the study's conclusions will close this significant knowledge gap by offering a more contextually appropriate comprehension of safety literacy and its consequences for Ibadan North societal well-being.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to comprehensively investigate and understand the dynamics of safety literacy within the context of Ibadan North local government area of Oyo state of Nigeria and its attendant impact on societal well-being among the residents. The specific objectives are to:

- examine the existing level of safety literacy among the residents of Ibadan North Local Government Area.
- explore cultural and contextual factors that impact safety literacy among the residents of Ibadan North Local Government Area, including local beliefs, practices, and community norms.
- investigate the direct correlation between safety literacy levels and societal well-being within Ibadan North Local Government Area.
- identify barriers that hinder the improvement of safety literacy in Ibadan North.

Research Questions

1. what is the level of safety literacy among the residents of Ibadan North Local Government Area?
2. what are the cultural and contextual factors that impact safety literacy among the residents of Ibadan North Local Government Area?
3. what is the impact of safety literacy level on societal well-being among the residents of Ibadan North Local Government Area?
4. what are the barriers that hinder the improvement of safety literacy among the residents of Ibadan North Local Government Area?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Improving security from both an individual and a state perspective requires safety literacy, whose primary goal is to mold civil society to better withstand threats. By taking these actions, the nation as a whole may become more stable in addition to increasing citizen security. Safety literacy among citizens results in opposing risks in the social, environmental, and economic domains (Olsen, Kruke and Hovden, 2007). Wysokinska-Senkus (2020) carried out a study to explain the concept of safety and security education in the context of sustainability in a Polish town. The study found that safety to the respondents meant eliminating threats to life and health, absence of terrorism-related threats, eradicating threats related to food and water poisoning and absence of threats relating to crime. The author concluded that there was a fairly

high level of safety literacy among the respondents but there was a need to further promote safety literacy among other Polish states.

Zarcadoolas, Pleasant and Greer (2005) also explored safety literacy as a subset of heath literacy. The study found that to be in a good state of health, it is important that individuals be able to obtain, process and understand basic safety information. The study also found that there was a low level of safety literacy among the sampled respondents. The study however concluded that there was a positive significant relationship between low safety literacy and increased vulnerability to health and safety risks. In a study that explored safety literacy among construction workers in the United Kingdom, Durand and Carpenter (2014) discovered that there was a noticeable gap in the safety literacy of construction site supervisors, which significantly increased the risk exposure to workplace accidents. The study emphasized the importance of targeted safety education in the construction sector.

In a similar study conducted among older adults in Hong Kong, Chan, So, Wong, Lee and Tiwari (2007) assessed the effectiveness of telephone health education to enhance safety literacy and practice of preventive measures during the SARS epidemic. Study participants were recruited from registered members of a government subsidized social service centre in Hong Kong, aged 55 and above, and living in low-cost estates. The study revealed that the respondents had a high level of anxiety concerning the disease due to low level of safety literacy. The study further discovered that the level of anxiety became lower and safety literacy was improved after the telephone health education. The study concluded that the health education intervention was an effective method of improving safety literacy.

According to Bolarinwa (2002) as cited in Ayodele and Olubayo-Fatiregun (2013), industrial workers need safety literacy because there is currently a low level of awareness regarding occupational hazards among Nigerian factory workers in rural areas. This means that the author posited that there was a low level of safety literacy due to low awareness of occupational hazards. The author claims that the study's participants had no idea about the dangers associated with their line of work or the equipment required for safe production. The majority of industrial workers, particularly laborers, were found to be semiliterate; they were often young dropouts without the education and training needed to understand danger.

Wong, Man and Chan (2021) examined the critical factors responsible for the non-use of personal protective equipment among construction workers in Singapore. The study used a qualitative approach to collect data from 60 construction workers using face to face interviews. It was discovered that the level of safety literacy among the workers was low and needed improvement. The study also found that the non-use of PPE among construction workers was influenced by various factors under the umbrella of personal, technical and environmental contexts. These factors include experience with accidents, disposition toward the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), habit, perception of risk, safety consciousness, safety literacy, expectations for results, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, social influence, safety incentives, safety–offence points system, safety regulations, safety oversight, prevention education, time constraints, and organizational settings.

Levesque, Arif and Shen (2012) conducted a study to monitor effectiveness of safety literacy and compliance with safety guidelines among some farmworkers and their family. The study revealed that only a small percentage of them were adhering to safety precautions like hand washing, donning gloves and other personal protective equipment, and avoiding eating fruits straight out of the field due to the possibility of pesticide exposure. The authors opined that this gap in safety literacy was due to language barrier in safety instruction manuals and that pesticide safety training was more effective when delivered in the native language of the respondents.

Language may be a barrier to understanding safety, but cultural factors also have an impact on safety behaviour. Carruth and Levin (2014) posits that effective safety literacy training should also take culture, personal behavioural patterns, values, and beliefs into account as these factors influence people's thoughts, decisions, and actions. Lavy, Aggarwal and Porwal (2010) also opined that different work ethics, family values, and company loyalty may cause immigrants to view hazards differently than non-foreign workers who are aware of workplace safety risks. According to them, many immigrants think accidents happen because of "God's will" or other unforeseen circumstances, and therefore they have no control over their well-being. Mubita et al. (2016) submitted that lack of funding is a factor that influence safety literacy in a society, especially among schools. This is because many schools, particularly those in low-income areas lack the funding and resources required to establish and sustain an extensive safety and health literacy program. This can involve providing money for workers, training, and safety gear.

Demographic factors have also been found to influence safety literacy and consciousness among individuals. For instance, the study of Willemsen et al. (2008) stated that older and female road users tend to experience lower levels of road accidents, which is in line with global research, which indicates that as individuals age, they tend to become more safety conscious, law-abiding and exhibit a propensity to take fewer risks. The younger drivers were found to be more prone to accidents due to inadequate road safety education compared to the older drivers. This may be due to the number of years of experience. Ogunmodede and Emeahara (2016) also found that level of education, location, age, sex, marital status and income level were determinants of safety literacy among commercial motorcycle riders in Nigeria. The study revealed that majority of commercial motorcycle riders are semi-literates who probably found it difficult to interpret or decode road signs on the highways, which made them more prone to accidents.

RESEARCH METHOD

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This is to allow for effective explanation of the relationship between safety literacy and societal well-being. The target population comprised residents of Ibadan North local government area of Oyo state. The stratified random sampling technique was employed for this study due to the existence of different strata such rural and urban dwellers among the residents. This approach therefore ensures adequate representation from various geographic and demographic segments within the local government area.

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A sample size of 400 was selected for the study using Glenn (1992)'s sample size determination table and a structured questionnaire was chosen as the instrument of data collection. The questionnaire comprised open-ended and closed-ended questions. Out of the 400 copies of questionnaires distributed by the researcher, with the aid of three other research assistants, a total of 350 were duly filled and returned by the respondents, which signifies a return rate of 87.5 percent. The retrieved questionnaires were analyzed using frequency counts, mean ranking and standard deviation through SPSS version 20, and the results were presented in tables.

Size of Population	Sample Size (n) for precision (e)	
	±5%	±10%
500	222	83
1,000	286	91
2,000	333	95
3,000	353	97
4,000	364	98
5,000	370	98
7,000	378	99
9,000	383	99
10,000	385	99
15,000	390	99
20,000	392	100
25,000	394	100
50,000	397	100
100,000	398	100

Fig 1.0: Glenn (1992) sample size determination table

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender		
Male	163	46.6
Female	187	53.4
Total	**350**	**100**
Age		
16-25 years	86	24.6
26-35 years	103	29.4
36-45 years	71	20.3
46-55 years	43	12.3
55 and above	47	13.4
Total	**350**	**100**
Level of Education		
No formal education	85	24.3
Primary education	95	27.1
Secondary education	114	32.6
Tertiary education	56	16
Total	**350**	**100**
Marital Status		
Single	124	35.5
Married	133	38
Divorced	67	19.1
Widowed	26	7.4
Total	**350**	**100**
Employment status		
Student	75	21.4
Unemployed	68	19.4
Employed	91	26

Self-employed	80	22.9
Retired	36	10.3
Total	**350**	**100**

Demographic characteristics of the respondents (Table 1) include gender, age, level of education and employment status. Among the respondents, 46.6% were male while 53.4% were female. In terms of age, 24.6% were between the ages of 16 and 25, 29.4% were between ages 26-35, 20.3% were between 36-45 years old, 12.3% were between 46-55 years, while 13.4% were aged 55 years and above. Based on level of education, 24.3% of the respondents had no formal education, 27.1% had basic or primary level of education, 32.6% had secondary education, while 16% had tertiary education. The table also shows that 35.5% of the respondents were single, 38% were married, 19.1% were divorced, while 7.4% were divorced. As regards employment status, 21.4% of the respondents were students, 19.4% were unemployed, 26% were employed, 22.9% were self-employed, while 10.3% were retired.

Table 2 Level of Safety Literacy

S/N		SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I recognize and understand common safety symbols such as those found on warning signs or product labels	130 (37.1)	102 (29.1)	23 (6.6)	59 (16.9)	36 (10.3)
2	I understand safety instructions provided in manuals, guides, or road signs	109 (31.1)	112 (32)	32 (9.1)	51 (14.6)	46 (13.1)
3	I am familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures in my home, workplace, and place of worship	97 (27.7)	90 (25.7)	31 (8.9)	56 (16)	76 (21.7)
4	I am aware of various local safety resources such as emergency numbers and safety hotlines	112 (32)	94 (26.9)	27 (7.7)	47 (13.4)	70 (20)
5	I practice safety measures such as using seat belts and wearing protective gears in my daily life	114 (32.6)	60 (17.1)	29 (8.3)	62 (17.7)	85 (24.3)
6	I can identify common safety hazards such as fire outbreak, electrical hazards, slippery surfaces, etc.	77 (22)	89 (25.4)	30 (8.6)	70 (20)	84 (24)
7	I attend orientation and lectures on community and personal safety	74 (21.1)	53 (15.2)	20 (5.7)	116 (33.1)	87 (24.9)

The above data implies that there is a high level of safety literacy among the residents of Ibadan north local government area of Oyo state of Nigeria. This is evident in the fact that many of the respondents agreed that they can comprehend safety symbols and instruction, they are aware of various local safety resources, practice safety measures and are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures in their homes, offices, and places of worship. However, the data depicts that the respondents scarcely attend orientation and lectures on personal and community safety.

This study differs from the findings of Durand and Carpenter (2014) who submitted that there was a low level of safety literacy among construction site supervisors and workers in the United Kingdom. It also negates the findings of Ayodele and Olubayo-Fatiregun (2013) that industrial workers needed safety literacy because there was a low level of awareness regarding occupational hazards among Nigerian factory workers in rural areas.

Table 3 Factors that Influence Safety Literacy

S/N		SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	Religious beliefs and practices	104 (29.7)	125 (35.7)	13 (3.7)	50 (14.3)	58 (16.6)
2	Cultural norms and behaviour	93 (26.6)	105 (30)	15 (4.3)	60 (17.1)	77 (22)
3	Community engagement in safety programs and interventions	109 (31.1)	104 (29.7)	21 (6)	59 (16.9)	57 (16.3)
4	Availability of local safety resources	102 (29.1)	99 (28.3)	15 (4.3)	74 (21.1)	60 (17.1)
5	Community awareness level	98 (28)	107 (30.6)	11 (3.1)	86 (24.6)	48 (13.7)
6	Education and literacy level	98 (28)	112 (32)	11 (3.1)	88 (25.2)	41 (11.7)
7	Government policies	99 (28.3)	87 (24.9)	14 (4)	71 (20.3)	79 (22.5)
8	Nature of business/occupation	112 (32)	105 (30)	11 (3.1)	60 (17.1)	62 (17.8)
9	Others	-	-	-	-	-

From table 3, the factors that influence safety literacy among the residents of Ibadan north local government can be gleaned. The table shows that the factors that influence safety literacy include religious beliefs and practices, cultural norms and behaviours, community engagement, availability of local safety resources, education and literacy level, community awareness level, government policies and nature of business or occupation. This is in consonance with the findings of Levesque, Arif and Shen (2012) who submitted that language was a factor that influence safety literacy among some Hispanic farmworkers and their families. This result also slightly corroborates the study of Ogunmodede and Emeahara (2016) where it was reported that demographic factors such as level of education, age, sex, marital status, etc. influenced safety literacy level among commercial motorcycle (okada) riders in Nigeria.

Table 4 Impact of Safety Literacy on Societal Well-being

S/N		SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	High level of safety literacy positively contributes to the overall well-being of the community	106 (30.3)	95 (27.1)	12 (3.4)	79 (22.6)	58 (16.6)
2	A shared understanding of safety practices contributes to community cohesion and harmony	118 (33.7)	87 (24.9)	15 (4.3)	67 (19.1)	63 (18)
3	Safety literacy level affects the economic prosperity of the community	99 (28.3)	92 (26.3)	10 (2.9)	77 (22)	72 (20.5)
4	Safety literacy increases the life expectancy of the community	104 (29.7)	107 (30.6)	15 (4.3)	68 (19.4)	56 (16)
5	Safety literacy increases the health status and healthcare quality in the community	108 (30.9)	97 (27.7)	9 (2.6)	65 (18.6)	71 (20.2)
6	My personal well-being is a function of my level of safety literacy	95 (27.1)	100 (28.6)	5 (1.4)	84 (24)	66 (18.9)
7	I have adequate trust in the safety of my community, considering the safety literacy levels of my fellow residents	79 (22.6)	98 (28)	13 (3.7)	85 (24.3)	75 (21.4)
8	Safety literacy contributes to the effectiveness of social services and support systems in the community	108 (30.9)	99 (28.3)	17 (4.9)	73 (20.8)	53 (15.1)

The table above presents the data on the perceived impact of safety literacy on the societal well-being of residents of Ibadan north local government area of Oyo state. It can be observed that the respondents opine that safety literacy has a positive impact on the well-being of individuals, and the society by extension. The study found that personal well-being is a function of safety literacy level. The study also established that safety literacy affects economic prosperity of the community, increases life expectancy, increases health status and quality of healthcare, and enhances community cohesion and harmony. This implies that the level of safety literacy of residents in Ibadan north local government area has an effect on the societal well-being. This lends credence to the submission of Zarcadoolas, Pleasant and Greer (2005) that for individuals and communities to be in a good state of health, it is important that residents of a community are able to retrieve, acquire, process and comprehend basic safety information. It also supports the findings of Chan, So, Wong, Lee and Tiwari (2007) who reported that there was high level of anxiety among older citizens of Hong Kong as a result of low safety literacy level during the SARS epidemic.

Table 5 Barriers of Safety Literacy

S/N		SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	Restricted access to information	97 (27.7)	108 (30.8)	15 (4.3)	72 (20.6)	58 (16.6)
2	Language barrier	97 (27.7)	104 (29.7)	9 (2.6)	77 (22)	63 (18)
3	Cultural resistance	89 (25.4)	91 (26)	5 (1.4)	77 (22)	88 (25.2)
4	Dearth of government initiatives	107 (30.6)	93 (26.6)	12 (3.4)	74 (21.1)	64 (18.3)
5	Nonchalant attitude to safety among residents	102 (29.1)	104 (29.7)	10 (2.9)	63 (18)	71 (20.3)
6	Lack of co-operation among community residents	94 (26.9)	96 (27.4)	15 (4.3)	79 (22.6)	66 (18.8)
7	Erroneous religious beliefs	111 (31.7)	99 (28.3)	14 (4)	58 (16.6)	68 (19.4)
8	Illiteracy	96 (27.4)	109 (31.2)	15 (4.3)	68 (19.4)	62 (17.7)

From the data above, it can be construed that safety literacy among residents of Ibadan north local government area encounters some barriers. The barriers identified in this study are restricted access to information, language barrier, cultural resistance, dearth of government initiatives, nonchalant attitude to safety, lack of co-operation, erroneous religious beliefs and illiteracy. This is in accordance with the submission of Carruth and Levin (2014) that culture, personal behavioural patterns, values, and beliefs were some of the challenges of safety literacy among individuals. This finding also supports that of Lavy, Aggarwal and Porwal (2010) that some of the barriers of safety literacy among individuals include family values, work ethics and company policy.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of safety literacy levels exposed a heterogeneous landscape, highlighting the community's assets and opportunities for development. Crucial determinants included cultural and contextual elements, which highlighted the need for customized safety instruction that considers and respects regional customs, beliefs, and practices. The correlation that has been observed between safety literacy and societal well-being highlights the extensive influence that informed safety practices have on a variety of aspects of community life, ranging from social cohesion and collective responsibility to health and economic stability.

Still, the study also revealed obstacles to the improvement of safety literacy. These obstacles—which include restricted information availability, language difficulties, cultural reluctance, false religious convictions, a carefree demeanour, and governmental regulations—indicate areas that require focused interventions. In order to create strategies that effectively close gaps

and promote a community where safety literacy is not only understood but also deeply embedded in daily activities, it is imperative that these obstacles be acknowledged.

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