Slide 1: Introduction

My name is Ernest Ekwunife from the University of Salford, a PhD student in the department of Construction and Project Management and I am pleased to present my doctoral research titled ***Construction Safety as a Pathway to Sustainability: Evaluating the Nigerian Building Code in Lagos State.***

This study explores construction safety as a pathway to broader sustainability outcomes within the Nigerian Building Code framework, with sustainability understood across environmental, economic and social dimensions.

Today, I will briefly discuss the motivation for the study, the research approach, some findings, and the implications for policy and practice.

Slide 2: Why This Study Matters (60 seconds)

The study is motivated by persistent challenges in the Nigerian construction landscape, particularly frequent building collapses, unsafe construction practices and their wider environmental and social consequences. Although the Nigerian Building Code was established to address these challenges, evidence suggests that outcomes remain weak in practice. This research therefore examines how the Code is interpreted and implemented by construction stakeholders in Lagos State, positioning safety as a foundational mechanism through which sustainable industry outcomes can be achieved. The study matters because without effective safety implementation, sustainability objectives within the construction industry cannot realistically be realised.

At the same time, sustainability has become a major global priority within construction. However, discussions on sustainability often focus on environmental and economic issues while paying limited attention to safety. This study argues that sustainability cannot realistically be achieved where construction safety culture remains weak.

In simple terms, if workers are unsafe, projects experience failures, and buildings do not perform as intended, then genuine sustainability becomes difficult to achieve.

Slide 3: Research Aim and Focus (50 seconds)

The aim of this study is to examine how implementation of Nigerian Building Code influences sustainability outcomes through construction safety practices in Lagos State.

To achieve this aim, the study focuses on five key areas:

First, risk reduction and accident prevention.

Second, structural stability and the safety performance of buildings.

Third, regulatory implementation and enforcement practices.

Fourth, stakeholder behaviour and compliance patterns.

And finally, how these factors collectively contribute to social, environmental, and economic sustainability.
The central question is whether safety serves as a pathway through which sustainability can be achieved within the Nigerian construction context.

Slide 4: Research Methodology (60 seconds)

The study adopts an interpretivist research philosophy because it seeks to understand the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders involved in construction activities.
A qualitative case study approach was selected to provide rich insights into the realities of safety implementation in Lagos State.
Data was collected through semi structured interviews involving sixteen construction stakeholders, including architects, engineers, builders, quantity surveyors, and regulatory officials.
The data was analysed using NVivo through thematic analysis.
Thematic saturation was reached after sixteen interviews, indicating that recurring patterns and themes had become sufficiently established within the dataset.

Slide 5: Preliminary Findings (90 seconds)

Four major themes have emerged from the analysis so far.
The first theme is uneven awareness.
Stakeholders demonstrated varying levels of understanding of the Nigerian Building Code. While some participants showed strong familiarity with the provisions of the code, others possessed only limited knowledge.
The second theme is reactive compliance.
Many participants indicated that compliance is often driven by the visibility of enforcement activities rather than by an intrinsic commitment to safety.
The third theme relates to institutional constraints.
Weak enforcement mechanisms, limited resources, and fragmented responsibilities were frequently identified as barriers to effective implementation.
The fourth theme is emerging recognition.
Interestingly, participants increasingly acknowledged that safety practices contribute to broader sustainability outcomes through improved project performance, reduced waste, and enhanced public confidence.
These findings suggest that while challenges remain, awareness of the safety sustainability relationship is gradually increasing.

Slide 6: How Safety Supports Sustainability (75 seconds)

One of the key arguments emerging from this research is that construction safety and sustainability are closely interconnected.

When safety practices improve, accidents are reduced, project disruptions decrease, and costly rework becomes less frequent.

This contributes directly to economic sustainability by improving efficiency and reducing unnecessary expenditure.

Safety also supports environmental sustainability because fewer failures and less rework mean reduced material waste and more efficient use of resources.

From a social perspective, safe construction protects workers, occupants, and communities.

Therefore, construction safety should not be viewed as separate from sustainability. Rather, it represents one of the practical mechanisms through which sustainability outcomes are achieved.

Slide 7: Recommendations (50 seconds)

Based on the findings, several recommendations are emerging.

First, stronger enforcement mechanisms are required to improve compliance with the Nigerian Building Code.

Second, stakeholder awareness and training programmes should be expanded to improve understanding and implementation of safety requirements.

Third, greater coordination is needed among regulatory institutions and industry stakeholders.

Finally, safety should be more explicitly integrated into sustainability policies and discussions within the construction sector.

Moving safety from a compliance obligation to a strategic sustainability tool could significantly improve industry outcomes.

Slide 8: Conclusion (45 seconds)

In conclusion, this research suggests that sustainable construction begins with safe construction.

While the Nigerian Building Code provides an important regulatory framework, regulation alone is insufficient without effective implementation and institutional commitment.

The preliminary findings indicate that construction safety plays a critical role in supporting economic, environmental, and social sustainability objectives.

Ultimately, safety should be recognised not merely as a compliance requirement, but as a foundational pathway through which sustainability can be achieved in the Nigerian construction industry.

> *"A building may be designed to stand for decades, but its sustainability journey begins long before completion. It begins with the safety culture that shapes its construction."*

Thank you very much for your attention, and I welcome your questions.