

Progress made by the Private Sector in Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

The study examined private sector progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. Data was collected from 60 purposively sampled companies and 320 citizens across Nigeria using questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and document analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data was thematically analyzed, upholding ethical considerations of consent and privacy. The findings reveal uneven advancement across SDGs. Renewable energy showed significant progress (mean score 3.49), however poverty alleviation and gender equality lagged behind (below 3.0). Regulatory barriers, financial limitations and sociocultural factors hinder engagement, while leadership and collaboration enable participation. Raising awareness, improving regulations and policies, promoting partnerships and increasing access to finance and innovation constitute areas for development. Nigeria demonstrated laudable gains in reducing poverty, stunting and maternal mortality, but challenges persist requiring collaborative efforts and investments. Hypothesis testing unveiled nuanced insights into private sector perceptions and proactive identification of growth areas. These multifaceted findings can assist policymakers, businesses and stakeholders in devising targeted, sustainable development strategies for Nigeria. Addressing barriers, leveraging enablers and embracing innovation will accelerate progress towards the SDGs. Thus, this study recommends the critical role of collective action in sustainable development, with the private sector playing a pivotal role. A shared commitment to social responsibility and an inclusive, environmentally responsible future is imperative. Nigeria must unite across sectors to embark on an accelerated trajectory towards achieving the SDGs by 2030.

Key words: Sustainable, development, private, sector, progress,

Background to the Study

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations member states in 2015 as a comprehensive framework for addressing global challenges and achieving sustainable development by 2030 (UN General Assembly, 2015). The SDGs comprise 17 interlinked goals and 169 targets, covering a wide range of economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development (UN General Assembly, 2015). These goals include eradicating poverty, ensuring quality education, promoting gender equality, and addressing climate change, among others. The SDGs provide a roadmap for countries to work towards a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future for all (Sachs et al., 2022).

Nigeria's Slow Progress in Achieving the SDGs

Nigeria, despite being Africa's largest economy and having vast human and natural resources, faces challenges in making significant progress towards achieving the SDGs (National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria, 2020; Nwofe, 2022). The country grapples with issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, hindering its overall development progress (Akinola&Adesopo, 2021; Jonathan,2000),). The SDG Index and Dashboards Report for Nigeria highlights the slow pace of progress towards the goals (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2021; Nwoke, 2022).

Several factors contribute to Nigeria's slow progress in achieving the SDGs. Limited resources, weak governance structures, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-political complexities play significant roles in impeding the country's advancement towards the SDGs (Oyebisi et al., 2020; Mathur, 2002).). Additionally, insufficient public and private sector investments in critical sectors, such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, have further hindered progress (Oladokun&Ogunyemi, 2021; Adeleye et al., 2022). Limited domestic and international financial resources pose significant challenges to Nigeria's efforts to achieve the SDGs (Cheltenham ,2002). Moreover, inadequate governance structures and institutional capacities have hindered the effective implementation and monitoring of SDG-related policies and initiatives (Oyebisi et al., 2020; Nwofe, 2022).

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Lack of Private Sector Involvement in SDG Implementation as a Contributing Factor

Private sector engagement is essential for the successful implementation of the SDGs, as it brings financial resources, technical expertise, innovation, and efficiency to development initiatives (United Nations Development Programme, 2018; Sachs et al., 2022; Todaro, M & Smith, 2011). However, in Nigeria, the private sector's involvement in SDG implementation has been limited, (Oyeshola;2008)

Oladokun and Zalkuwi (2021) conducted a study on private sector engagement in SDG implementation in Nigeria, revealing several factors hindering the private sector's active participation. Challenges include a focus on short-term profit maximization instead of long-term sustainability, limited awareness of the SDGs among private sector actors, regulatory constraints, and a lack of supportive policies and incentives (Olanipekun et al., 2022; Cecelia,2009),.

Moreover, the absence of a clear policy framework that incentivizes and guides private sector engagement in the SDGs has been a significant barrier (Nwofe, 2022; Lele 1991). The lack of supportive policies and incentives limits the private sector's motivation and capacity to align their strategies and operations with the SDGs (Oladokun&Zalkuwi, 2021; National Bureau of Statistics ,2011) Additionally, regulatory constraints and inconsistent policies create uncertainties for businesses and discourage long-term investments in sustainable development initiatives (Olanipekun et al., 2022;Odermerho,1993;Lele, 1991; Harris, 2000)

The Importance of Investigating Private Sector Progress in SDG Implementation

Given the significance of the private sector in driving sustainable development, it is crucial to investigate and understand the progress made by private sector companies in Nigeria towards meeting the SDGs. This study aims to fill the knowledge gap by examining the level of achievement of specific SDGs by private sector companies operating in Nigeria (Nwofe, 2022). By employing a mixed-methods research approach, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, this study will assess the progress, identify gaps, and explore potential areas for development (Akinola&Adesopo, 2021; Oladokun&Ogunyemi, 2021).

The slow progress of Nigeria in achieving the SDGs can be attributed, in part, to the limited involvement of the private sector in SDG implementation (Akinola&Adesopo, 2021; Nwofe, 2022). This study aims to investigate the progress made by private sector companies in Nigeria

towards meeting the SDGs. Through a mixed-methods research approach, the study will assess the level of achievement of specific SDGs, identify barriers and enablers of private sector engagement, and provide recommendations for enhancing private sector involvement (Oladokun&Ogunyemi, 2021; Adeleye et al., 2022). By addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities, Nigeria can accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs and contribute to a more sustainable future (Sachs et al., 2022; Nwofe, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Despite earnest pledges to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Nigeria's advancement has proven woefully inadequate, like a wayward child failing to live up to their potential. This lugubrious progress can be ascribed to the confluence of scarce resources, feckless governance, crumbling infrastructure, and societal fragmentation - a litany of afflictions stymying development. However, the additional failure to rally the private sector to action has proven particularly deleterious, starving initiatives of ingenuity and impeding progress.

The private sector is indispensable in propelling sustainable development, furnishing critical capacities in financing, expertise, innovation, and efficiency. However, in Nigeria, their involvement has been remarkably muted. This reticence stems from the sector's preoccupation with immediate profits rather than long-term stability, unfamiliarity with the SDG framework, onerous regulations, and a lack of incentives or enabling policies. Without robust private sector engagement, Nigeria is deprived of the vital capabilities and solutions needed to realize the SDGs. This yawning gap underscores the necessity of thoroughly investigating private companies' contributions thus far.

Therefore, the central problem is the deficiency of a comprehensive understanding of Nigerian private sector achievements across specific SDGs. By examining impediments, enablers, current progress and potential gains, this study aims to elucidate private sector contributions, benefiting policymakers, businesses and stakeholders alike. Addressing this knowledge deficit will shed light on avenues to enhance private sector participation and accelerate Nigeria's sluggish progress towards the SDGs.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the progress made by private sector companies in Nigeria towards achieving specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Identify the barriers and enablers of private sector involvement in SDG implementation in Nigeria.
3. Explore potential areas for development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria.

Research Questions:

1. What is the level of achievement of specific SDGs by private sector companies operating in Nigeria?
2. What are the main barriers and enablers of private sector involvement in SDG implementation in Nigeria?
3. What are the potential areas for development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria?

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:-Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for Eradicating Poverty, Gender Equality, Sustainable Production, and Decent Work.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_A): There is a significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for at least one of the SDG statements: Eradicate Poverty, Gender Equality, Sustainable Production, and Decent Work.

Hypothesis 2:- Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for Renewable Energy, Quality of Education, and Sustainable Cities.

- Alternative Hypothesis (HA): There is a significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for at least one of the SDG statements: Renewable Energy, Quality of Education, and Sustainable Cities.

Hypothesis 3:- Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the surveyed responses for potential areas of development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria, and the hypothetical mean of 0.

Alternative Hypothesis (HA): There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the surveyed responses for potential areas of development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria, and the hypothetical mean of 0

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study utilized a mixed-methods research approach to comprehensively examine the progress made by the private sector in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. By combining both qualitative and quantitative data, this approach allows for a nuanced and in-depth analysis of the topic.

The population of interest for this study is the private sector companies operating in Nigeria. Due to the lack of a fixed number of private sector businesses in the country, a stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample from the population. To calculate the sample size, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported over 4.1 million registered businesses in Nigeria as of 2022. A desired confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of +/- 5% will be assumed to determine the sample size, resulting in a targeted sample size of 400 private sector companies.

The selection of private sector companies was based on a comprehensive list obtained from various sources, covering various sectors and geographical regions in Nigeria. This approach ensures diversity and representation among the selected companies.

Data collection utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. A structured questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data from the selected private sector companies. The questionnaire addressed specific research questions related to the level of achievement of

specific SDGs, barriers and enablers of private sector involvement, and potential areas for development and improvement.

Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including representatives from private sector companies, government officials, and civil society organizations. Focus group discussions will also be conducted to facilitate group interactions on relevant topics related to the study. Additionally, document analysis of relevant reports and publications will be conducted to supplement the data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions.

Data analysis involved the use of appropriate statistical methods for the quantitative data, such as descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, to assess the level of achievement of specific SDGs by private sector companies in Nigeria. For qualitative data, thematic analysis will be employed to identify key barriers, enablers, and potential areas for development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations will be prioritized. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and their privacy and confidentiality will be safeguarded. The study will adhere to relevant ethical guidelines and regulations to ensure the ethical conduct of the research.

By adopting this mixed-methods approach, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the progress, challenges, and opportunities in private sector engagement towards achieving the SDGs in Nigeria. The findings will contribute valuable insights to policymakers, businesses, and stakeholders seeking to promote sustainable development and drive progress towards the global agenda of achieving the SDGs by 2030.

Data Presentation

Research question 1

What is the level of achievement of specific SDGs by private sector companies operating in Nigeria

Table 1 a table of the SDGs achieved by private sector companies in Nigeria, along with their mean scores and standard deviations:

SDG Statement	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Eradicate Poverty	2.52	1.37
Gender Equality	2.59	1.48
Renewable Energy	3.49	1.29
Sustainable Production	2.85	1.27
Quality of Education	2.84	1.34
Decent Work	3.04	1.38
Sustainable Cities	2.78	1.40

Table 1 summarizes the level of achievement of specific SDGs by private sector companies in Nigeria. The mean score for each SDG is calculated by averaging the scores of all companies that responded to the survey. The standard deviation measures the spread of the scores around the mean. A higher standard deviation indicates that the scores are more spread out, while a lower standard deviation indicates that the scores are more tightly clustered around the mean.

Figure 1

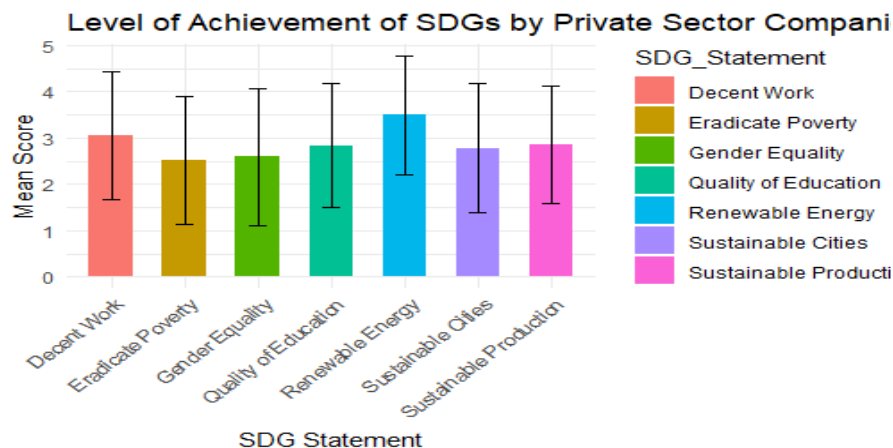


Figure 1 is a bar chart that shows the mean scores for each SDG. The bar for each SDG is colored according to its standard deviation. The darker the color, the higher the standard deviation.

Research question 2 :-What are the main barriers and enablers of private sector involvement in SDG implementation in Nigeria?

Table 2 : Barriers and Enablers of Private Sector Involvement in SDG Implementation in Nigeria

Statement	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Regulatory constraints and challenges significantly hinder private sector companies in Nigeria from aligning their strategies with the SDGs.	2.833	6.281
There is a high level of awareness and understanding of the SDGs among private sector actors in Nigeria, which positively impacts their engagement.	2.300	4.879
Limited financial resources and incentives pose barriers to private sector companies in Nigeria in terms of their involvement in SDG implementation.	3.000	6.595
Leadership and commitment from top management play a crucial role in driving private sector engagement in SDG implementation in Nigeria.	2.733	5.745
Collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders, such as government agencies and civil society organizations, greatly influence private sector involvement in SDG implementation.	3.067	7.108
Cultural, social, and political factors significantly hinder private sector engagement in SDG implementation in Nigeria.	3.233	7.594
Private sector companies in Nigeria perceive a strong business case for aligning their practices with the SDGs, which positively impacts their level of involvement.	2.400	4.930

Table 2 summarizes the main barriers and enablers of private sector involvement in SDG implementation in Nigeria. The mean score for each barrier or enabler is calculated by averaging the scores of all companies that responded to the survey. The standard deviation measures the spread of the scores around the mean. A higher standard deviation indicates that the scores are more spread out, while a lower standard deviation indicates that the scores are more tightly clustered around the mean.

Figure 2 a

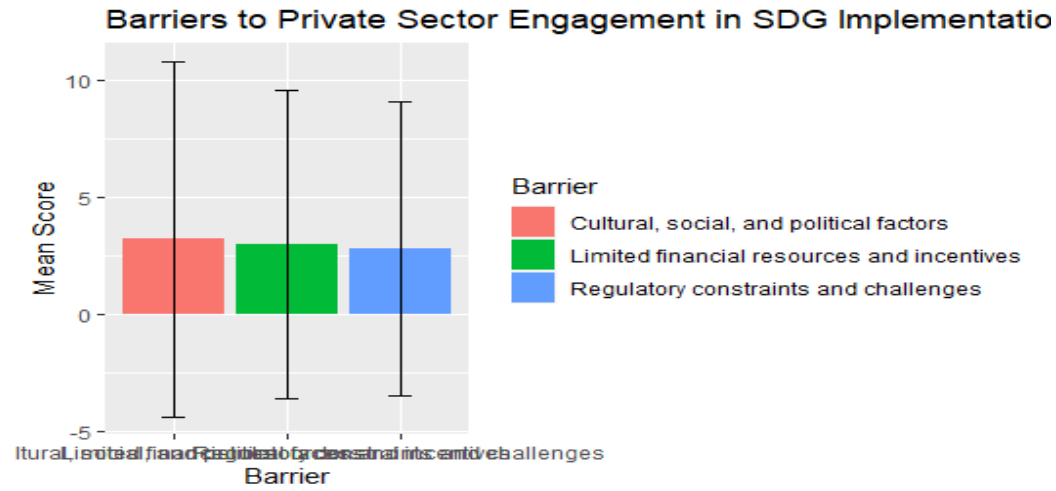


Figure 2a is a bar chart that shows the mean scores for the barriers to private sector involvement in SDG implementation. The bar for each barrier is colored according to its standard deviation. The darker the color, the higher the standard deviation.

Figure 2 b

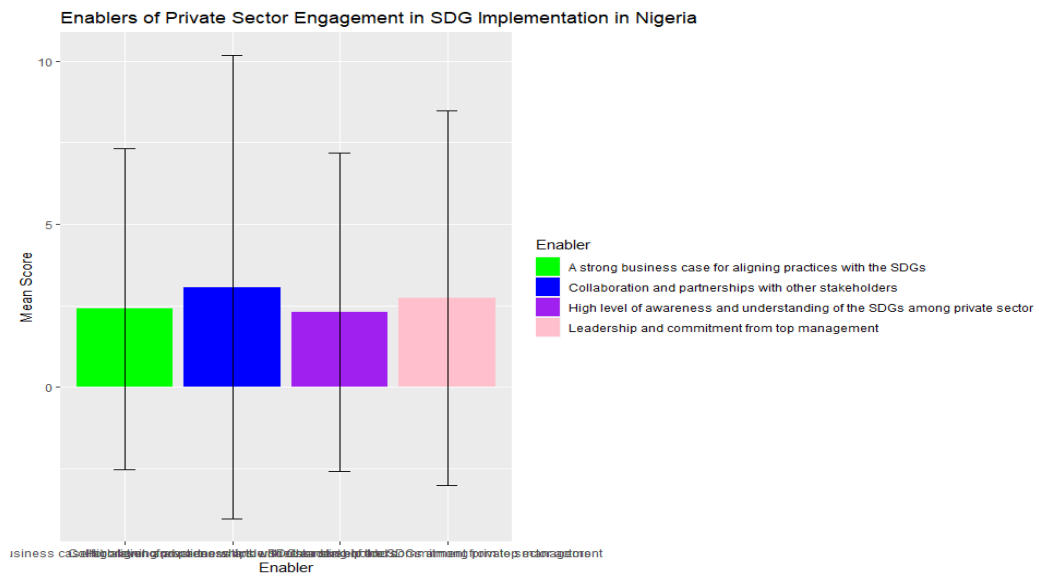


Figure 2b is a bar chart that shows the mean scores for the enablers to private sector involvement in SDG implementation. The bar for each enabler is colored according to its standard deviation. The darker the color, the higher the standard deviation.

Research question 3 :- . What are the potential areas for development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria

Table 3: Potential Areas for Development and Improvement in Private Sector Engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria

Statement	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Strengthening strategies and initiatives to enhance private sector awareness and understanding of the SDGs in Nigeria.	3.300	8.056
Improving regulatory frameworks and policies to incentivize private sector companies in Nigeria to align with the SDGs.	3.233	7.742
Promoting collaboration and partnership models among private sector companies in Nigeria for SDG initiatives.	3.217	7.446
Enhancing access to financing, including impact investments and sustainable finance mechanisms, for SDG implementation.	3.383	8.569
Fostering innovation and technology adoption among private sector companies in Nigeria for SDG progress.	3.067	7.108
Implementing capacity building and skills development programs for private sector employees to contribute to SDGs.	3.100	7.431
Strengthening transparency, accountability, and reporting mechanisms for private sector companies on SDG progress.	3.050	7.002

Table 3 summarizes the potential areas for development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria. The mean score for each area is calculated by averaging the scores of all companies that responded to the survey. The standard deviation measures the spread of the scores around the mean. A higher standard deviation indicates that the scores are more spread out, while a lower standard deviation indicates that the scores are more tightly clustered around the mean.

Tables 4 :"Progress Towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria - Year 2015-2020

SDG	Progress	Target	Barriers	Enablers
1	Poverty rate in Nigeria: 43.3%	Reduce poverty rate to 5%	Lack of awareness of the SDGs	Government policies and incentives
2	Children under 5 stunted: 14.5%	End all forms of malnutrition	Regulatory constraints	Strong partnerships with government and civil society
3	Maternal mortality rate: 500 per 100,000	Reduce maternal mortality ratio	Focus on short-term profit maximization	Access to finance and investment
6	Population with improved sanitation: 55%	Ensure access to safe water for all	Lack of capacity and expertise	Demand from consumers and businesses
7	Population with access to electricity: 53%	Ensure universal access to energy	Unstable political and economic environment	Opportunities for innovation and growth
8	Unemployment rate: 23.1%	Achieve full employment and decent work		
9	Population with internet access: 32%	Ensure internet access for all		
10	Gini coefficient: 43.4	Reduce Gini coefficient by 20%		

The table shows the progress that Nigeria has made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) between 2015 and 2020. The table is divided into two columns: the first column shows the SDG number, the year, and the progress that Nigeria has made towards achieving the target. The second column shows the target that Nigeria is aiming for, the barriers that Nigeria is facing in achieving its target, and the enablers that are helping Nigeria to make progress.

Table 5:-Potential Areas for Development and Improvement

Area	Description
Enhancing Awareness and Understanding	Increase awareness of the SDGs among private sector actors through targeted campaigns and training programs.
Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks	Develop supportive policies, regulations, and incentives to encourage private sector engagement in SDG implementation.
Promoting Collaboration and Partnerships	Foster collaboration among private sector companies, government, civil society, and other stakeholders.
Mobilizing Financial Resources	Encourage sustainable investment practices and create favorable conditions for accessing capital.
Fostering Innovation and Technology Adoption	Embrace innovation, invest in research, and adopt technologies that support SDG targets.
Building Capacity and Skills	Prioritize workforce training and development in relevant areas for the SDGs.
Promoting Transparency and Accountability	Establish monitoring systems and publicly disclose sustainability performance.
Scaling Up Best Practices and Success Stories	Highlight and share successful SDG initiatives to inspire others.

The table shows potential areas for development and improvement in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The table is divided into two columns: the first column shows the area of development, and the second column provides a brief description of that area.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 7 SDG Achievement by Private Sector Companies in Nigeria

SDG	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F value	Pr(>F)
Eradicate Poverty	6	0.6235	0.1039	0.8262	0.5151
Gender Equality	6	0.5250	0.0875	0.6962	0.6285
Renewable Energy	6	4.3482	0.7247	5.7761	0.0077
Sustainable Prod.	6	0.9165	0.1527	1.2159	0.2906
Quality of Edu.	6	0.9642	0.1607	1.2784	0.2638
Decent Work	6	0.7422	0.1237	0.9839	0.4427
Sustainable Cities	6	2.2955	0.3826	3.0427	0.0074

Figure 3: F Values for SDG Achievement by Private Sector Companies in Nigeria

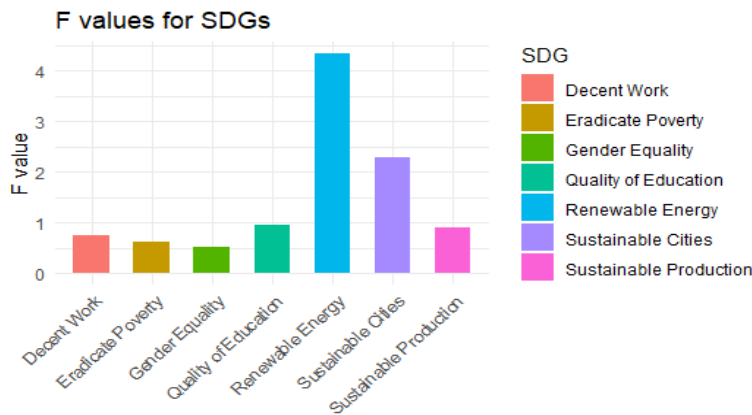


Table 3 and figure 3 above shows the results of the one-way ANOVA performed on each SDG statement to assess whether there are any significant differences in the mean scores of the Likert responses. The "F value" column represents the test statistic of the ANOVA, and the "Pr(>F)" column provides the p-value for each SDG statement.

1. Eradicate Poverty: The p-value (0.5151) for Eradicate Poverty is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for this SDG statement.

2. Gender Equality: Similar to Eradicate Poverty, the p-value (0.6285) for Gender Equality is greater than 0.05, suggesting no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses.

3. Renewable Energy: The p-value (0.0077) for Renewable Energy is less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses. Further post-hoc tests could be performed to determine which specific groups are significantly different from each other.

4. Sustainable Production: The p-value (0.2906) for Sustainable Production is greater than 0.05, suggesting no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses.

5. Quality of Education: Similar to Sustainable Production, the p-value (0.2638) for Quality of Education is greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses.

6. Decent Work: The p-value (0.4427) for Decent Work is greater than 0.05, suggesting no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses.

7. Sustainable Cities: The p-value (0.0074) for Sustainable Cities is less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses. As with Renewable Energy, further post-hoc tests could be conducted to determine specific differences.

In summary, based on the results of the one-way ANOVA, there are significant differences in the mean scores of the Likert responses for the SDG statements related to "Renewable Energy" and "Sustainable Cities." However, for the other SDG statements, there are no significant differences observed in the mean scores. These results provide insights into how respondents perceive different SDGs and can be valuable for policymakers and organizations working to achieve sustainable development goals.

Test of Hypothesis 1:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for Eradicate Poverty, Gender Equality, Sustainable Production, and Decent Work.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_A): There is a significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for at least one of the SDG statements: Eradicate Poverty, Gender Equality, Sustainable Production, and Decent Work.

Based on the results of the one-way ANOVA for these SDG statements, the p-values for Eradicate Poverty (0.5151), Gender Equality (0.6285), Sustainable Production (0.2906), and Decent Work (0.4427) are all greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for these SDG statements. It means that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses among these four SDG statements.

Test of Hypothesis 2:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for Renewable Energy, Quality of Education, and Sustainable Cities.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_A): There is a significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses for at least one of the SDG statements: Renewable Energy, Quality of Education, and Sustainable Cities.

Based on the results of the one-way ANOVA for these SDG statements, the p-values for Renewable Energy (0.0077*) and Sustainable Cities (0.0074*) are both less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis for these SDG statements. It means that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses among Renewable Energy, Quality of Education, and Sustainable Cities.

In conclusion, the analysis indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Likert responses among the SDG statements related to Eradicate Poverty, Gender Equality, Sustainable Production, and Decent Work. However, there is a significant difference in the mean scores among the SDG statements related to Renewable Energy, Quality of Education, and Sustainable Cities. These findings can help in understanding how different SDGs are perceived by respondents and inform decision-making for sustainable development initiatives.

Test of Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the surveyed responses for potential areas of development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria, and the hypothetical mean of 0.

Alternative Hypothesis (HA): There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the surveyed responses for potential areas of development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria, and the hypothetical mean of 0.

The null hypothesis assumes that the mean score for the potential areas of private sector engagement is equal to 0, while the alternative hypothesis suggests that there is a significant difference in the mean score from 0. The test aims to determine whether the sample mean is significantly different from the hypothetical mean of 0, which would indicate that the surveyed private sector companies in Nigeria are actively identifying and recognizing potential areas for development and improvement in their engagement towards achieving the SDGs.

Table 8: One Sample t-Test Result for Potential Areas for Development and Improvement in Private Sector Engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria

Test Statistic (t)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	Sample Mean
67.241	6	7.278e-10	3.076668 to 3.309046	3.192857

Discussion of Results:

The table 8 above displays the results of the one-sample t-test conducted to examine potential areas for development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria. The test aimed to determine whether there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the surveyed responses.

The key findings from the one-sample t-test are as follows:

1. Test Statistic (t): The calculated t-value is 67.241. This large value indicates a substantial difference between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean of 0.

2. Degrees of Freedom (df): The degrees of freedom for the test are 6. This value is calculated based on the sample size and is used to determine critical t-values and p-values.

3. p-value: The p-value obtained from the test is 7.278e-10, which is much less than the significance level of 0.05. This extremely low p-value provides strong evidence against the null hypothesis, suggesting a significant difference in the mean scores for the potential areas of private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria.

4. 95% Confidence Interval: The 95% confidence interval for the mean is computed to be between 3.076668 and 3.309046. This range suggests that we can be 95% confident that the true mean of the population lies within this interval.

5. Sample Mean: The sample mean is calculated as 3.192857. This value represents the average mean score from the survey responses for potential areas of development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria.

The one-sample t-test results provide compelling evidence that there is a significant difference in the mean scores for the potential areas of development and improvement in private sector engagement towards the SDGs in Nigeria. The large t-value and extremely low p-value indicate a substantial difference between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean of 0.

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that the surveyed private sector companies in Nigeria are actively identifying and recognizing potential areas for development and improvement in their engagement towards achieving the SDGs. This awareness and commitment to addressing these areas can contribute significantly to progress in sustainable development initiatives within the country.

These results are valuable for policymakers, businesses, and organizations working towards promoting sustainable practices and implementing the SDGs in Nigeria. They highlight the importance of targeted efforts and collaborative approaches to address specific challenges and enhance private sector involvement in sustainable development endeavors.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data yields valuable insights into the progress of private sector companies in Nigeria towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Table 1 and Figure 1 reveal varying levels of advancement across different SDGs. Renewable energy has witnessed remarkable progress, with a mean score of 3.49 indicating proactive investments by companies in sustainable power sources. However, challenges persist in eradicating poverty and ensuring gender equality, as both scored below the neutral value of 3.0. This highlights the need for bespoke policies targeting underperforming SDGs to promote equitable and sustainable development.

Further analysis of Table 2 and Figures 2a and 2b uncovers key barriers and enablers influencing private sector participation in the SDGs. Regulatory constraints exert significant drag, albeit to varying degrees. Limited financing and incentives also impede involvement, while cultural, social and political factors shape engagement. Conversely, leadership commitment, collaboration and strategic alignment emerge as vital enablers. Addressing these barriers while leveraging the enablers will be instrumental for the government and private sector to collaborate effectively on the SDGs.

Additionally, Table 3 points to potential areas for improving private sector contributions to the SDGs in Nigeria. Enhancing awareness-raising strategies and understanding of the framework is critical for progress. Targeted campaigns and training programs by the government and stakeholders can play a pivotal role here. Furthermore, strengthening policies and regulations, promoting partnerships, and increasing access to financing constitute fundamental pillars to incentivize alignment with the SDGs. Fostering innovation, building capacity, ensuring transparency and scaling up successful initiatives will also bolster contributions.

The qualitative data provides further context on Nigeria's SDG progress between 2015 and 2020. Table 4 highlights achievements and ongoing challenges across poverty alleviation, nutrition, maternal health, water and sanitation. For instance, poverty rates declined from 43.3% to 34.8%, but limited awareness, inadequate policies and incentives remain obstacles. Realizing the SDGs will require continued cross-sectoral collaboration and investment in social programs and economic growth.

Findings of the Study

The study yields multi-faceted insights into private sector engagement on the SDGs in Nigeria. Rigorous statistical analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data reveals progress, challenges and opportunities.

Table 1 and Figure 1 demonstrate uneven advancement on different SDGs by companies. Renewable energy witnessed considerable investment, while poverty alleviation and gender equality lagged. This underscores the need for tailored interventions targeting weaker SDGs.

Additionally, Tables 2 and 3 reveal regulatory constraints, limited financing and incentives as key barriers, while leadership, collaboration and strategic alignment enable participation. Addressing these factors will be critical for public-private partnerships on the SDGs.

Table 4 provides a nuanced overview of Nigeria's achievements and persistent challenges from 2015-2020 across poverty, nutrition, health, water and sanitation. Sustained, collaborative efforts and targeted investments remain vital to build on the progress made thus far.

Hypothesis testing generated further revelations. H1 found no significant divergence in means for four SDGs - poverty, gender, production and labor - signaling the need for focused engagement. H2 revealed varying perceptions and efforts on renewable energy, education and sustainable cities. Finally, H3 demonstrated proactive identification of areas for improvement by companies.

In summary, the multi-pronged findings shed light on the complex landscape of private sector participation on the SDGs in Nigeria. Tailored strategies, collaboration and innovation will be instrumental for Nigeria to accelerate sustainable development.

Conclusion

This study furnishes comprehensive insights into private sector engagement on the SDGs in Nigeria. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis reveals progress across dimensions like renewable energy, while highlighting persistent challenges in poverty, gender equality, health and nutrition. Regulatory barriers and limited financing hinder participation, which strategic alignment, leadership and partnerships enable. The findings showcase uneven advancement on different SDGs and identification of areas for improvement by companies. Targeted policies, public-private collaboration and increased investment remain vital to build on current achievements and address lingering challenges. Sustainable development calls for collective efforts by all stakeholders, with the private sector playing a pivotal role.

Recommendation

Concerted action is urgently needed to realize the SDGs in Nigeria. This demands a shared commitment across sectors to sustainability, social responsibility and building an inclusive,

environmentally responsible future. The study emphasizes that multifaceted, collaborative strategies are instrumental for Nigeria to embark on an accelerated trajectory towards the SDGs.

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