ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES OF SMES: A PATHWAY TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ONE (NO POVERTY) IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the framework for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all. Studies show that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) account for many private sector businesses and economic activity in developed and less developed countries. In addition, SMEs' expanding role globally has been identified; hence, they have the potential to contribute to the achievement of SDGs. The study examines how SMEs' entrepreneurial activities can assist in achieving SDG 1. The research design for the study is a survey. Three research questions were raised to guide the study and 2 Hypotheses were tested. The sample for the survey comprised 133 entrepreneurs in Lagos and Ogun States, who are manufacturers, service providers and artisans. The data for the study were collected through a structured questionnaire titled 'Entrepreneurial Activities of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises: A Pathway to Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) One (No Poverty)'. The instrument had a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.79. The data collected from the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including frequency and percentage analyses, ANOVA, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The result of the study revealed no significant difference in the personal development capacity and sustainable efforts of SMEs due to enterprise type. At the same time, there was a significant relationship between the personal development capacity/ sustainable efforts of SMEs and poverty alleviation. The study recommends enhanced capacity-building programs for entrepreneurs and increasing both government and private support for sustainable business operations.

Keywords: Personal Capacity Development, Sustainable Development, No Poverty, Entrepreneurial Activities, Entrepreneurs

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are 17 in number, were established by the United Nations (UN) in 2015. They were put together to tackle and end urgent global challenges by 2030. The goals are strategic measures to achieve an equitable and sustainable future for everyone (United

Nations, 2015). The global difficulties include inequality, poverty, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.

The rationale behind the establishment of the SDGs is listed below:

- To provide a framework that would apply to all countries, whether developed or undeveloped;
- To address economic, social, and environmental aspects of development in a unified way, because these aspects are related and best pursued together;
- To eradicate poverty, which is the bane of inadequate infrastructure/social amenities, illiteracy, and insufficient health facilities;
- To address climate change, resource depletion, pollution and environmental degradation;
- To focus on the most vulnerable persons such as children, women, the physically challenged, and marginalised villages/towns;
- To reduce violence, promoting peace/justice and effective governance (United Nations, 2015). All these are channelled towards a comprehensive, collaborative, and long-term approach to sustainable development globally.

Progress toward achieving the SDGs nine years after their launch is documented in the United Nations report released in June 2024. The following progress indicators for SDG One were: International Poverty, National Poverty, Social Protection, Access to Basic Services, Resilience to Disasters, Government Spending on Essential Services, and Poverty Eradication Policies. For International Poverty, there was reported moderate progress, but a need to accelerate the progress; for National Poverty, Social Protection and Government Spending on Essential Services, marginal progress was reported, and hence the need for significant acceleration on these indicators. Poverty Eradication, which is the final of the SDG 1 global indicator of progress of achievement, lacks sufficient data, so no progress report can be given on this (United Nations, 2024).

Entrepreneurial activities have been identified as a catalyst for the growth and development of many economies. The activities of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) have been channelled toward poverty eradication by ensuring the optimum use of economic resources such as human, man-made, and natural resources for the production of goods and services which improve living standards and, in turn, assist in growing and developing the economy as a whole. Studies have reported the vital role that SMEs have played in accelerating the pace of economic growth and development, which invariably helps to alleviate the poverty rate in such economies.

In a study conducted by Odebode, Oyewole, and David (2020) on Entrepreneurial Activities: Its Influence on Economic Development in Lagos State, Nigeria, it was reported that the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs in the state had a significant influence on living standards and the use of economic resources, which will ultimately lead to poverty reduction. Similarly, in an article written by Lessidrenska (2019) on SMEs and SDGs: Challenges and Opportunities, it was reiterated that the World Bank and OECD gave multiple reasons why SMEs are critical for achieving SDGs. Among the reasons given are: Poverty alleviation, particularly in the villages, amongst women and other socially disadvantaged groups. Small and medium-scale enterprises have been playing remarkable roles in national economies; hence, they are leading in assisting to meet most of the economically centred SDGs, which include promoting inclusive and

sustainable economic growth, generation of employment opportunities and decent work particularly for the poor, advancing sustainable industrialisation and innovation, and advocating a good quality of life, better education and good health for all.

The study variables are the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs and No Poverty, which is SDG 1. Entrepreneurs engage in a wide range of economic activities in the day-to-day administration, management and operations of their businesses to continue to be catalysts of economic growth and development, maintain their share of the market and also participate in the changes that keep occurring in society and the economy. The entrepreneurial activities of SMEs in this study are represented by two primary variables: Personal Capacity Development (PCD) and Sustainability Development Efforts (SDE). The PCD of the entrepreneur is channelled towards improvement in the service and product delivery, which focuses on upgrading and updating knowledge and skills, while the SDE covers the following key areas: creativity/innovation, research/development, development and utilisation of indigenous raw materials/technology and social responsibility. The PCD and SDE of entrepreneurs are deployed for the effective/efficient operations and management of their enterprises.

Statement of the Problem

Global social, economic and environmental challenges and the need to have a universal framework to address them urgently necessitated the development of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This action was taken by the United Nations (UN) in the year 2015 and was meant to direct efforts of all nations towards the realisation of these goals by the year 2030. The SDGs recognise that poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice are issues that are connected and require thorough solutions.

Taking a thorough look at Nigeria, it was reported that there was a high poverty rate, with an estimated 40.1% of the population living below the national poverty line, translating to roughly 83 million people. In other words, on average, 4 out of 10 individuals in Nigeria have real per capita expenditures below ₦137,430 per year (NBS, 2019). World Bank in Nigeria (2024) reported that the poverty rate in Nigeria is estimated to be about 38.9% in 2023, with an estimated 87 million Nigerians living below the poverty line, giving Nigeria the world's second-largest population living in poverty, after India. Many studies have shown that entrepreneurial activities are a means of alleviating poverty in society; hence, there is a serious pursuit of entrepreneurship worldwide. Anekwe, Ndubuisi-Okolo and Attah (2018), in their study, reported that entrepreneurship development is a key tool for poverty reduction, stimulating employment and economic growth in developing countries. Entrepreneurship promotes economic growth, increases educational achievement and accelerates the rate of economic development. For the high level of poverty in Nigeria to be alleviated, thorough attention must be paid to the pursuit of entrepreneurship.

It is against this backdrop that this study was embarked upon to find out how entrepreneurial activities of SMEs can become a pathway to the achievement of SDG 1, which is No Poverty.

Objectives of the Study

The study is to examine how the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs can assist in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty). Specifically, it will:

1. examine the level of awareness of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) about SDG 1.
2. find out the Personal Capacity Development (PCD) initiatives

entrepreneurs are taking to achieve SDG 1.
3. determine the Sustainability development efforts (SDE) SMEs are undertaking to achieve SDG 1

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of SMEs about SDG 1?
2. What personal capacity development initiatives are entrepreneurs taking to achieve SDG 1?
3. What are the sustainability development efforts SMEs are undertaking to achieve SDG 1?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) towards the achievement of SDG 1 (No Poverty) due to enterprise type
2. There is no significant relationship between SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) and SDG 1(No Poverty).

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2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study helps us to understand the relationship between the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs and their contribution to poverty alleviation under SDG One, which is No Poverty. The two theories upon which this study is hinged are: Schumpeter's Innovation Theory of Entrepreneurship (1934) and The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

Schumpeter's Innovation Theory of Entrepreneurship (1934) sees entrepreneurs as economic agents through whom development takes place because of the creativity and innovation that is displayed through their activities. Through their various activities, new products and services are introduced to the market, production processes are improved upon, employment opportunities are created, and other economic benefits. These economic benefits go a long way in reducing poverty to a great extent because they create avenues for the employment of economic resources. When economic resources are optimally employed, incomes are earned, which assists in reducing poverty levels in society. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) (Chambers & Conway, 1992) explains how entrepreneurial activities contribute to sustainable poverty alleviation through the rapid development of Human Capital, Social Capital, Financial Capital, and Natural Capital. The activities of entrepreneurs that promote the development of the four types of Capital mentioned above are: training and skill development, networking and mentorship, income generation and access to credit and sustainable business practices. The effective utilisation of these capital assets plays a vital role in reducing poverty levels within society.

Sustainable Development Goals in Perspective

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by United Nations (UN) member states in September 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000–2015) and were aimed at tackling global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, and economic growth. The SDGs officially came into effect on January 1, 2016, with a target year of 2030 for achieving them (Umasabor & Ogiedu, 2023). The 17 SDGs are a set of connected targets for the world to work towards to create an improved and more sustainable future for all. Although the poorest parts of the world are the most affected, it applies to all countries. There are about 10 specific targets within each goal, such as ensuring that all children complete quality primary education and that there is equal opportunity for women and men to quality technical, vocational and tertiary

education, under the umbrella of SDG 4: Quality Education (Ford, 2023). The 17 SDGs are listed below:

1)No Poverty. **2)** Zero Hunger. **3)** Good Health and Well-being **4)** Quality Education **5)** Gender Equality **6)** Clean Water and Sanitation **7)** Affordable and Clean Energy **8)** Decent Work and Economic Growth **9)** Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure **1**0) Reduced Inequality **11)** Sustainable Cities and Communities – Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. **12)** Responsible Consumption and Production. **13)** Climate Action. **14)** Life Below Water. **15)** Life on Land. **16)** Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. **17)** Partnerships for the Goals. However, SDG 1, which focuses on eradicating poverty in all its forms, calls for the global elimination of poverty. A report was given that an estimated 431 million people in Africa still lived in abject poverty in 2022. A good number of the continent's poorest people, including the 400m who live below the global poverty line of $1.90 a day, are also those affected most by the failure to attain the other SDGs, having less access to education and health services, plus no electric light at night (Neil, 2023).

SMEs and Poverty Alleviation

The activities of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) have been identified as an avenue through which economic growth and development, which is a much-desired goal of all nations, can be achieved. The activities of SMEs include: employment generation, avenues for effective and efficient utilisation of natural and man-made economic resources, the accelerated level of productivity, a source of profit and income earnings for households, the display of creativity, innovation and ingenuity of business entrepreneurs, improved living standards, reduction in living cost, provision of varieties of commodities/services and many others. All these aforementioned activities have been identified to assist in reducing the poverty levels of many nations.

Nursini (2020) conducted a study on Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and poverty reduction: empirical evidence from Indonesia; the results revealed that SMEs contribute to job creation and provide stable sources of income for rural households, making them a more effective tool for poverty reduction compared to the indirect effects of public investments.

The Central Bank Nigeria (2021) reported that SMEs have experienced remarkable progress over the years and have made a great impact on the country's economy. The estimated total number of SMEs was placed at 17.4 million, and they have contributed about 50% of commercial jobs between the years 2015 and 2021. Similarly, the sector has also been shown to contribute about 90% of the manufacturing sector. In addition, the contribution of SMEs to the general GDP showed a significant annual average of about 48%.

Onah, Ezeodili and Okwueze (2024) conducted a study on Interrogating Sustainable Development Goal 1 and poverty in South East Nigeria: Is there any development to be sustained? The findings from the study showed that Sustainable Development Goal 1 had a significant positive influence on income generation in the South East, Nigeria. The implication of this is that SDG 1's influence on income generation in South East Nigeria has empowered communities, improved economic opportunities, and significantly contributed to poverty alleviation and sustainable living. The study concluded that Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1) has played a vital role in advancing poverty alleviation efforts in South East Nigeria. Targeted interventions such as the establishment of microfinance banks, entrepreneurship training, and supportive government policies have contributed to achieving SDG1 through the empowerment of individuals to free themselves from

poverty by establishing sustainable livelihoods

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study is Descriptive (survey). The study's population is entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The respondents from the study were 133 entrepreneurs who reside in Lagos and Ogun State and they were selected through a simple random sampling method. The questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurial Activities of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises: A Pathway to Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 (No Poverty)", which had a 0.79 Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument had two sections; the first section requested the biodata of the respondents, which included gender, age, marital status, and enterprise type. The second section comprises 21 items requesting entrepreneurs to agree or disagree with statements about their personal capacity development and sustainability efforts. The Likert scale type, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, on a rating scale of 1-4, is the response format of the data collection instrument. The instrument used for data collection was hosted on the internet, and the link (https://forms.gle/wHnQ7psY8DSWi7FE8) for completing the Google Form was sent out to the target respondents. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools, which include frequency, percentages, ANOVA, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, were used to analyse data collected from the study. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 is used to analyse the data collected. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Socio-Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Table 1: **Classification of Respondents by Gender and Marital Status**

Gender	F	%	Marital Status	F	%
Male	57	42.8	Single	19	14.3
Female	76	57.2	Married	114	85.7
Total	**133**	**100**	**Total**	**133**	**100**

Source: Author's Analysis from field Survey data using SPSS Version 27(2025)

The data in Table 1 reveal the classification of respondents by gender and marital status. Out of the total number of 133 that participated in the study, 57 (42.8%) were males, while 76 (57.2%) were females. This data reveals that a large percentage of women are venturing into entrepreneurship, and this calls for more attention to women's entrepreneurship to complement the achievements of businessmen, which will further drive economic growth, social change, and innovation in the economy.

Table 2: **Classification of Respondents by Age and Enterprise Type**

Age	F	%	Enterprise Type	F	%
20 years and below	5	3.8	Manufacturers	9	6.8
21-30 years	4	3.0	Service Providers	71	53.4
31-40 years	22	16.5	Others (Artisans)	53	39.9
41 years and above	102	76.7			
Total	**133**	**100**	**Total**	**133**	**100**

Source: Author's Analysis from field Survey data using SPSS Version 27(2025)

The data in Table 2 reveal the age distribution of the respondents from the study. It revealed a low percentage (6.8%) of youths, many of whom will likely be in school but are already involved in entrepreneurial activities. It is an indication that these young adults are already embracing entrepreneurship and the likelihood of them choosing it as a career path after graduation from school. Similarly, the data on enterprise type revealed a low percentage of manufacturers (6.8%) who are entrepreneurs. This data shows that the enabling environment for the thriving of manufacturers is poor; hence, more entrepreneurs are switching to service provision. This will invariably affect the growth of the manufacturing sector and the GDP of the country. The percentage of artisans, like Jewellery makers, milliners, Upcyclers, etc. (39.9%) and service providers (53.4%) who were involved in the study is also very commendable.

Analysis of Responses

The analyses of responses are presented in line with the first research question raised and the three hypotheses formulated and tested by the study

Analysis of Research Question

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of SMEs about SDG 1?

Table 3: Analysis of responses to the level of awareness of entrepreneurs of SDG 1

Level of Awareness of SDG 1(No Poverty)	Agreed (N)	%	Disagree (N)	%
I am aware of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1), which aims to eliminate poverty in all its forms worldwide.	108	82	18	18
My enterprise has a wide range of activities targeted towards achieving SDG 1.	113	85	20	15
My entrepreneurial activities can assist in the achievement of SDG 1.	112	85	21	15
I am knowledgeable about government policies and programs related to poverty reduction and how they affect my business.	112	85	21	15
I understand Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty) and actively consider its principles when shaping my business strategies and operations.	118	89	15	11
Average Rating and Percentage	**113**	**85**	**20**	**15**

Source: Author's Analysis from field Survey data using SPSS Version 27(2025)

The data in Table 3 revealed that a significant percentage of the respondents from the study are very much aware of SDG 1, which is the elimination of poverty globally. The figures in the table show that 85% of the respondents are aware of SDG 1 and they channel their entrepreneurial activities towards poverty alleviation in Nigerian society. This report reveals the role that SMEs are capable of playing in the achievement of SDG 1, and hence their activities should be strengthened and reinforced.

Research Question 2: What personal capacity development initiatives are entrepreneurs taking to achieve SDG 1?

The analysis of the statements used to elicit responses from the participants of the study revealed that 84.4% agreed that they have been making concerted efforts to build up their capacity as entrepreneurs. The implication for SDG 1 is that entrepreneurs know the importance of personal capacity development for enhancing managerial, financial, technical, and problem-solving skills, which impacts positively on their

businesses. When business performance improves, profit margin increases and business sustainability is enhanced; this contributes to poverty reduction and higher levels of income are achieved.

Research Question 3: What are the sustainability development efforts SMEs are undertaking to achieve SDG 1?

The analysis of the statements used to elicit responses from the participants of the study revealed that 87.2% agreed that sustainability development efforts have been integrated into the operations of their businesses. The implication for SDG 1 is that sustainable development efforts build enterprise resilience, create employment of all economic resources, and increase productivity. This contributes to improved living standards and poverty reduction.

Analysis of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) towards the achievement of SDG 1 due to enterprise type

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis of the difference in Enterprise Type due to Personal Capacity Development (PCD) and Sustainability Development Efforts (SDE) of SMEs

Variables Entrepreneurial activities		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
PCD	Between Groups	641.376	2	320.688	2.657	.074
	Within Groups	15328.817	130	120.699		
	Total	15970.192	132			
SDE	Between Groups	284.127	2	142.063	1.251	.290
	Within Groups	14419.533	130	113.540		
	Total	14703.659	132			

***Note**:* Adopted from SPSS Output generated from the study data.

Source: Author's Computation (2025).

Table 4 shows the ANOVA result for the test of differences due to the enterprise type of SMEs' PCD and SDE. There was no significant difference in the scores due to the enterprise type (manufacturers, service providers and Artisans). PCD scores revealed: F (2, 130) = 2.657, P= 0.074, while SDE scores revealed: F (2, 130) =1.251, P = 0.290. The P-values of both PCD and SDE are higher than the acceptable 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the stated hypothesis is upheld; there is no significant difference in SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) towards the achievement of SDG 1 due to enterprise type.

4.2.3

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) and SDG1 (No Poverty).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis of the relationship between SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) and No Poverty.

		PCD	SDE	PA
PCD	Pearson Correlation	1	.607**	.201*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.022
	N	133	133	133
SDE	Pearson Correlation	.607**	1	.239**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.006
	N	133	133	133
PA	Pearson Correlation	.201*	.239**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.006	
	N	133	133	133

"* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)"

***Note**:* Adapted from SPSS Output generated from the study data.

Source: Author's Computation (2025).

Table 5 shows the result of the Pearson Correlation of the test for the relationship between SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (personal capacity development and sustainable development efforts) and SDG1 (poverty alleviation). There was a significant relationship between entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) and SDG 1 (No Poverty). The P-values and R-values for both PCD (0.02, .201) and SDE (0.01, .239), which were the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs, were significant. Therefore, the stated hypothesis is rejected; there is a significant relationship between SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (personal capacity development and sustainable development efforts) and SDG1 (No Poverty).

Discussion of Findings

The responses from the research questions raised to guide the study revealed significantly high percentage values. The findings on the level of awareness of SMEs about SDG 1 showed that the total number of respondents which is 133, of which 113 (85%) responded positively to the statement used to elicit the level of awareness of the entrepreneurs about SDG 1, while 20 (15%) responded that they are unaware of SDG 1. This high percentage of entrepreneurs in Nigeria, who are Manufacturers, Service Providers, and Artisans, who are aware of the global efforts of the nations to eradicate poverty, is highly commendable. A thorough look at the statements used to elicit these responses shows that entrepreneurs in this part of the world are already positioned through their entrepreneurial activities to ensure that poverty at all levels is eliminated. This awareness of the need to eradicate poverty has made them organise empowerment programmes that cover various aspects and sectors of their business practices. Furthermore, the findings on the personal capacity development initiatives and sustainability development efforts of entrepreneurs also showed significantly high percentage values of 84.4% and 87.2%, respectively. These findings suggest PCD and SDE will strengthen entrepreneurs to build resilient and productive businesses, thereby promoting the employment of all economic resources and ensuring poverty reduction, which aligns with SDG 1 (No Poverty).

Gbadebo (2024) reported in a study that the Nigerian government has implemented various policies and programmes aimed at

strengthening SME to assist in poverty reduction. These programs are organised with the intention that they would result in a status change for entrepreneurs' businesses, hence helping to improve productivity, business growth, generation of employment opportunities, increase household earnings, and will positively affect the poor by reducing the poverty levels in the country generally.

The first research hypothesis tested in the study is that there is no significant difference in SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) towards the achievement of SDG 1 (No Poverty) due to enterprise type. The result of the statistical analysis used to test for differences revealed no significant difference due to enterprise type when the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs and SDG1, no poverty, were compared. This result shows that irrespective of the type of entrepreneur- manufacturer, service provider, or Artisan- their SDE and PCD initiatives channelled towards poverty alleviation will yield the same result.

The second hypothesis tested in the study is that there is no significant relationship between SMEs' entrepreneurial activities (PCD and SDE) and SDG 1(No Poverty). The result of the statistical analysis used to test for a relationship revealed significant values. The implication of this is that when entrepreneurs engage in regular personal capacity development programmes incorporated with various sustainability development efforts like creativity/innovation, research and development, utilisation of indigenous local raw materials/technology and social responsibility, it will result in increased household incomes, creation of employment opportunities, improved living standards, enhanced business sustainability and growth and many more.

The findings from the study are in agreement with those of a study conducted by Adebayo (2020), where it was reported that SMEs directly influence poverty reduction and employment generation. In particular, the study finds that the SMEs' contributions accounted for over 60% of the variation in poverty reduction (employment generation). Similarly, Lessidrenska (2019) reported in an article that SMEs are important for poverty reduction, especially in rural areas and among women and other socially disadvantaged groups. Because of their role and place in national economies, SMEs take the lead in meeting most of the economic-related SDGs, including promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, increasing employment opportunities and decent work, especially for the poor, advancing sustainable industrialisation and innovation, and creating a positive push for a higher quality of life, better education and good health for all.

Conclusion

The scope of the study covers how the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs assist in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1). The result of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs towards the achievement of SDG 1(No Poverty) due to enterprise type (Manufacturers, Service Providers, Artisans). The two study variables of the entrepreneurs' activities were their Personal Capacity Development (PCD) initiatives and Sustainable Development Efforts (SDE). The PCD initiatives of entrepreneurs cover improvement in knowledge and skills deployed towards the operation and management of the business. The SDE undertaken by entrepreneurs covers creativity/innovation, research and development, utilisation of indigenous local raw materials/technology and social responsibility. The implication of this is that, irrespective of the enterprise type, the PCD

initiatives and SDE undertaken by entrepreneurs toward the achievement of SDG 1 (No Poverty) will both assist in poverty alleviation. Furthermore, the result of the study also revealed that there was a significant relationship between entrepreneurs' PCD initiatives and SDE undertaken and poverty alleviation. This result implies that the effectiveness of entrepreneurial activities should focus not only on profit-making but also on creating social and environmental value.

Recommendations

The results of the study show that the activities of entrepreneurs are capable of assisting in the achievement of SDG 1, which is to end poverty in all its forms. The following recommendations are made:

1. The government should ensure that the business terrain in Nigeria is favourable to entrepreneurs whose businesses demonstrate engagement in personal and community development initiatives by granting them tax holidays, tax relief, and grants/aids.
2. Organisers of Capacity-Building Programs for Entrepreneurs should expand the scope of content coverage to improve entrepreneurs' understanding and application of sustainable practices and community-based business models.
3. Collaborative efforts among stakeholders, that is, governments, NGOs, and the private sector, should be encouraged to support entrepreneurial initiatives that focus on local poverty and development challenges.
4. Start-up accelerators, innovation hubs and incubation centres should include social innovation themes to encourage entrepreneurs to design solutions that directly focus on poverty and promote all-around development.

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