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Understanding Sectoral Priorities In Developing Nigeria's Blue Economy Framework: Evidence From Lagos's Coastal And Marine Sectors

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Abstract
The development of a national Blue Economy (BE) framework is a complex socio-political process that promotes sustainable use of marine resources for economic diversification, but its governance often reflects sectoral interests competing for influence. This study examined the relationship between stakeholders' sectoral priorities and their perception of the development of Nigeria's BE framework. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was administered to 146 stakeholders in Lagos's coastal and marine sectors from government, private sector, local communities, and academia. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression to evaluate the relationship between five sectoral priorities (Shipping and Port Operations, Tourism and Recreation, Fisheries, Marine Conservation, and Renewable Energy) and perceived framework development. The regression model was significant ($R^2 = 0.515$, $F(5, 140) = 44.48$, $p < .001$) indicates a significant relationship between sectoral priorities and stakeholder perception. Priorities for Shipping/Ports ($\beta = .381$, $p < .001$), Tourism ($\beta = .285$, $p < .001$), and Marine Conservation ($\beta = .251$) positively predicted perceived framework development. Critically, a priority for Fisheries demonstrated a significant negative relationship ($\beta = -.168$, $p = .007$), indicating perceived marginalization. This suggests that Nigeria's BE framework is viewed as favoring capital-intensive industrial and environmental global sustainability sectors over traditional fisheries. The study concludes that inclusive engagement, particularly of fisheries and community actors is essential for legitimacy and sustainability Recommendations include explicitly integrating pro-fisheries policies into the framework and creating a multi-stakeholder oversight council to ensure equitable inclusion and address the current legitimacy deficit.

Keywords: *Blue Economy, Framework Development, Sectoral Priorities, Stakeholder Perception*

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I. Introduction

The emergence of a national blue economy framework has been promoted globally as a strategic roadmap for harnessing the potential of ocean and coastal resources in a sustainable, inclusive, and economically viable manner[1]. The global pursuit of a Blue Economy (BE) has gained significant momentum as nations seek to balance the economic exploitation of ocean resources with the imperative of marine ecosystem conservation[2]. For coastal nations like Nigeria, endowed with a 853km coastline and vast maritime resources, the BE presents a strategic pathway for sustainable development, food security, and economic diversification[3]. Central to harnessing this potential is the formulation of a national blue economy framework, which serves as a critical roadmap to guide policy, coordinate sectoral activities, and align stakeholder actions towards sustainable outcomes[4]. Such a framework is intended to provide direction for aligning policies, investments, and governance mechanisms that culminate into a coherent vision for integrating diverse maritime sectors from fisheries and shipping to tourism and renewable energy into a unified national strategy[5].

However, the development of a national BE framework is far from a purely technical or rational planning exercise but a socio-political process in which diverse sectoral interests compete for recognition, resources, and influence. Scholars emphasize that blue economy governance is inherently contested because sectors such as shipping, oil and gas, artisanal fisheries, and coastal tourism often have divergent priorities and unequal power to shape policy outcomes[6]. Emerging scholarship underscores that it is inherently a socio-political process, characterized by negotiation, contestation, and the interplay of diverse stakeholder interests[5,7]. Different sectors – each with distinct economic power, political influence, and sustainability profiles, compete to ensure that their priorities are reflected in the final policy architecture. The resulting framework, therefore, is not a neutral document but a reflection of whose interests are seen to be prioritized, potentially leading to the empowerment of certain actor groups and the marginalization of others[8]. As a result, the extent to which a framework is perceived as legitimate or well-developed depends not only on its design but also on whether it

reflects the priorities of different stakeholder groups[9]. This dynamic is particularly acute in developing economies like Nigeria, where governance challenges and high dependency on natural resources can intensify these contests.

Despite the critical importance of this process, a significant knowledge gap persists. While there is growing literature on the theoretical potential of the BE in Nigeria[10,11], there is a stark lack of empirical evidence examining how competing sectoral priorities among stakeholders directly shape the *perception* of the BE framework's development. While policy statements highlight the importance of maritime transport, fisheries, and offshore energy, few studies have systematically examined how stakeholders rank these sectors or how these rankings influence their confidence in the emerging framework[12]. It remains unclear which sectors are deemed most critical by stakeholders and how these preferences influence their assessment of the framework's adequacy and inclusivity. Understanding this relationship is crucial, as stakeholder perceptions of legitimacy and fairness are fundamental to the successful implementation of any major policy initiative[4].

To address this gap, this study is guided by the following research questions:

i. Which blue economy sectors do stakeholders prioritize for development in Nigeria?
ii. What is the relationship between stakeholders' sectoral priorities and their perception of the development of Nigeria's blue economy framework?

Consequently, the objective of this paper is to empirically determine which sectoral priorities are associated with a perception that the framework is well-developed, and which are linked to a sense of perceived exclusion. By doing so, this research moves beyond a technical appraisal of the BE to provide a critical analysis of the socio-political forces shaping Nigeria's pathway towards a sustainable ocean economy.

II. Literature Review

This study is situated at the intersection of political economy, stakeholder theory, and sustainable ocean governance. The review synthesizes literature to build a theoretical framework positing that the development of a national Blue Economy (BE) framework is a socio-political construct, where perceived progress is intrinsically linked to whose sectoral interests are seen to be served.

The Political Economy of Environmental Policy

Environmental policy is rarely a dispassionate, technocratic process guided solely by scientific evidence. Instead, it is profoundly shaped by the political economy, the interplay of economic interests, power relations, and political institutions[5]. Policies, including those governing the BE, often reflect the interests of the most powerful and well-organized stakeholders who have the resources to influence the policy agenda (Bennett, 2018). This can result in policies that prioritize economic growth and capital accumulation for elite groups over equitable distribution and environmental sustainability[13].

In the context of marine governance, this dynamic manifests as a tendency to favor large-scale, capital-intensive industries like industrial shipping, offshore oil and gas, and large aquaculture operations. These sectors often have established lobbying power, close ties to government ministries, and can frame their interests as synonymous with national economic development[4]. Consequently, the institutional and regulatory frameworks that emerge may be designed to facilitate their operations, often at the expense of less powerful groups. Understanding BE framework development through a political economy lens thus necessitates an analysis of which sectors hold this "power of influence" and how their priorities become embedded in policy architectures.

Stakeholder Theory and Resource Governance

Stakeholder theory provides a critical framework for analyzing the processes and outcomes of resource governance. It posits that any organization or policy including a national BE framework should account for the interests of all groups affected by its actions[7]. In practice, this translates to a spectrum of policymaking approaches, from exclusive to inclusive.

Exclusive policymaking occurs when engagement is limited to a narrow set of powerful actors, leading to policies that lack legitimacy and are prone to contestation and failure[8]. In contrast, inclusive governance seeks the meaningful participation of a broad range of stakeholders, including marginalized groups such as small-scale fishers and coastal communities.

Inclusivity is argued to enhance the legitimacy, equity, and effectiveness of policies by incorporating local knowledge, building trust, and ensuring that benefits and costs are fairly distributed[14]. The failure to achieve inclusivity can perpetuate existing vulnerabilities and lead to "blue washing," where the BE agenda advances under a veneer of sustainability while reinforcing social inequities[4]. This paper examines the Nigerian BE framework through this lens, investigating whether the process and its perceived outcome reflect an inclusive or exclusive approach.

Blue Economy Sectors and Their Competing Agendas

The BE encompasses a diverse array of sectors, each with distinct economic models, sustainability impacts, and political constituencies. These sectors often have competing or conflicting agendas, which must be reconciled within a national framework.

Traditional Maritime Sectors (e.g., Shipping & Port Operations): These are often the most established and economically powerful. Their agendas typically prioritize infrastructural development, trade facilitation, and regulatory efficiency, and they may view stringent environmental regulations as a barrier to growth[15].

Emerging Sectors (e.g., Offshore Renewable Energy): This sector represents a modern, "green" vision of the BE. While promising for decarbonization, it can create new spatial conflicts with fishing grounds and shipping lanes, leading to new forms of exclusion[16].

Conservation (Marine Protection): Driven by global environmental goals and NGOs, this agenda prioritizes the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and biodiversity conservation. This can clash with sectors that depend on resource extraction, and if implemented without local consent, can negatively impact fishing communities[8].

Small-Scale Fisheries: This traditional sector is crucial for livelihoods and food security but is often politically marginalized. Its agenda centers on securing access rights, protecting customary fishing grounds, and ensuring that BE policies do not displace them in favor of more lucrative industries[15].

The negotiation among these sectors: each vying for space, funding, and policy attention is the central political battleground upon which BE frameworks are built.

Conceptualizing "Framework Development" as a Perception

Traditionally, policy development is measured by the production of documents and formal structures. This study, however, conceptualizes the "development of Nigeria's blue economy framework" not merely as a technical outcome, but as a *social perception* held by stakeholders. The degree to which a stakeholder perceives the framework as "developed", "adequate", or "inclusive" is hypothesized to be a direct function of the extent to which they see their own sectoral priorities reflected within it[4].

A stakeholder whose prioritized sector (e.g., Shipping) is visibly championed by the framework will likely perceive it as well-developed. Conversely, a stakeholder whose key sector (e.g., Fisheries) is perceived as neglected or threatened by the emerging policy will view the framework as underdeveloped or illegitimate. Therefore, the dependent variable in this study is not an objective measure of policy quality, but the aggregate of these subjective stakeholder assessments, which ultimately determine the framework's social license to operate.

Synthesis and Theoretical Position: Integrating these strands, the theoretical framework for this paper is that the perception of BE framework development in Nigeria is a product of a political economy process where the priorities of powerful sectors (Shipping, Tourism) are likely to be positively correlated with this perception, while the priorities of marginalized sectors (Fisheries) will be negatively correlated, revealing a pattern of perceived inclusion and exclusion.

III. Methodology

Study Area

This study focuses on Lagos State, Nigeria's primary coastal and marine economic hub. With a coastline of approximately 180 kilometers along the Atlantic Ocean, Lagos hosts Nigeria's largest marine and coastal sector, handling over 70% of the country's maritime trade through the Apapa and Tin-Can Island ports (Lagos State Government, 2022). The study area encompasses coastal communities including Badagry, Eti-Osa, Lagos Island, Ibeju-Lekki, and Epe, where livelihoods are intricately linked to marine resources through fishing, tourism, and related activities.

Key government agencies involved in crafting Nigeria's blue economy framework include the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), responsible for maritime safety, shipping development, and coordination of blue economy initiatives; the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), which manages port infrastructure and shipping operations; the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, established in 2023 to provide national policy direction; and state-level institutions such as the Lagos State Ministry of Waterfront Infrastructure Development and the Lagos State Waterways Authority (LASWA), which regulate inland waterways and ferry transport. These agencies collaborate with international development partners and private sector stakeholders to develop policies guiding maritime activities, environmental conservation, and sustainable resource utilization in the region[3].

In addition to government agencies, private sector actors (shipping companies, oil and gas firms, tourism operators), non-governmental organizations, and community associations of artisanal fishers and

women processors are active in the Lagos coastal zone. This mosaic of actors reflects both the opportunities and challenges in aligning diverse sectoral interests into a coherent national blue economy framework. The selection of Lagos as the study area is particularly relevant given its strategic importance to Nigeria's blue economy ambitions, hosting emerging sectors such as coastal tourism, potential offshore renewable energy projects, and extensive fisheries operations, while simultaneously facing significant challenges including coastal erosion, pollution, and resource use conflicts.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to statistically examine the relationship between stakeholders' sectoral priorities and their perception of Nigeria's blue economy framework development. The study population comprised of 10,000 actors engaged in the management and use of coastal and marine resources. Using taro Yamane formular, a sample size of 146 valid responses was obtained, grouped into government agencies (n=40), private sector operators (n=36), local communities (n=38), and academic institutions (n=32) based on purposive and systematic random sampling techniques.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The dependent variable was the perceived Blue Economy Development. The independent variables were stakeholders' priorities for five key sectors, measured on a 5-point Likert scale: Shipping & Port Operations (X), Tourism & Recreation (X), Fisheries (X), Marine Conservation (X), and Renewable Energy (X). The instrument demonstrated strong reliability through pilot testing with Cronbach's alpha > 0.78. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The regression model tested the relationship and was specified as:

Where:

Y = Blue Economy Framework Development

β_0 = constant,

β - β_5 are the regression coefficients

X_1 = Shipping & Port Operations

X_2 = Tourism & Recreation

X_3 = Fisheries

X_4 = Marine Conservation

X_5 = Renewable Energy

= Error term.

IV. Result And Discussion

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic distribution of respondents provided on Table 1 reflects a diverse and experienced stakeholder base shaping Nigeria's Blue Economy framework. Females constituted 60.3% compared to males (39.7%), indicating growing gender inclusion in maritime-related governance and operations. In terms of age distribution, most respondents were mid-career professionals aged 36–45 years (40.41%) followed by 26–35 years (26.03%) while respondents aged 46 and above (25.34%) also form a substantial segment, reflecting mature expertise essential for long-term strategic policy engagement. The educational profile reveals that 87.67% possessed tertiary education, confirming a highly literate and informed sampled population professionally qualified to contribute meaningfully to the discourse on sectoral prioritization within the blue economy. Majority of the respondents worked in shipping and logistics (58.9%) and government agencies (30.82%), emphasizing Lagos's central role as a maritime hub, though limited participation from fishing (2.74%) and tourism (3.42%) suggests weak grassroots representation. The income distribution shows that nearly half (48.63%) earned above ₦200,000 monthly, aligning with their professional status, while over 60% had more than six years' experience, ensuring credible, context-informed responses. Overall, the composition highlights a technically competent but elite-dominated respondent pool, reinforcing the need for broader inclusion in Nigeria's Blue Economy development discourse.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58	39.7
	Female	88	60.3
Age Group (years)	18–25	12	8.22
	26–35	38	26.03
	36–45	59	40.41
	46 and above	37	25.34
Educational Level	No formal education	1	0.68

	Primary education	1	0.68
	Secondary education	16	10.96
	Tertiary education	128	87.67
Occupation	Fishing/Aquaculture	4	2.74
	Shipping/Logistics	86	58.90
	Tourism/Hospitality	5	3.42
	Government/Regulatory agency	45	30.82
	Other	6	4.11
Monthly Income (₦)	Below 50,000	10	6.85
	50,000-100,000	21	14.38
	101,000-200,000	44	30.14
	Above 200,000	71	48.63
Experience	Less than 1 year	12	8.22
	1-5 years	44	30.14
	6-10 years	50	34.25
	Over 10 years	40	27.39

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2025)

Sectoral Priorities for Blue Economy Development

Table 2 and Figure 1 indicate that renewable energy ranked highest (mean = 1.94; 41.10% first choice), followed by tourism and recreation (mean = 2.10, 23.87%) and shipping/port operations (mean = 2.20, 20.55%). This prioritization supports the research objective of identifying key sectors for blue economy development and reflects stakeholder preference for sustainability-driven sectors aligned with global goals. Conversely, fisheries (mean = 2.50, 10.27%) and marine conservation (mean = 2.70, 4.11%) ranked lowest, suggesting limited engagement or development. The moderate standard deviation (0.82) shows some variability in preferences, across occupations. Overall, the results affirm stakeholders' forward-looking orientation toward renewable energy and underscore the need for targeted policy and investment to strengthen these high-priority sectors within Nigeria's blue economy framework.

Table 2: Sectoral Priorities for Blue Economy Development

Sector	Rank (Mean)	Frequency (Rank 1)	Percent
Renewable Energy	1.94	60	41.10
Tourism and Recreation	2.10	35	23.97
Shipping & Port Operations	2.20	30	20.55
Fisheries	2.50	15	10.27
Marine Conservation	2.70	6	4.11

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2025)

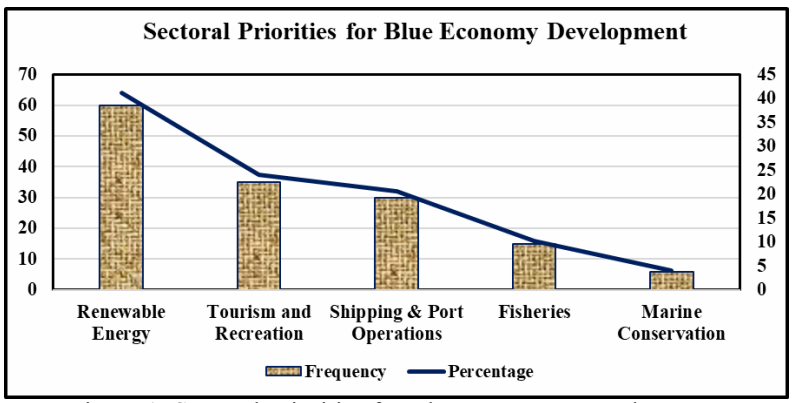

Figure 1: Sectoral Priorities for Blue Economy Development
Source: Author's Fieldwork (2025)

Reason for Sectoral Prioritization

Table 3 and Figure 2 indicates that (54.79%, mean = 1.58, SD – 0.77) of respondents prioritize sectors for environmental sustainability. This finding helps to understanding the rationale behind sectoral choices and that ecological concerns drive stakeholder priorities. The emphasis on environmental sustainability reflects a commitment to long-term ecosystem health, aligning with global sustainability agendas. Economic benefits

(27.40%) and social impact (13.70%) are secondary, suggesting that while profitability and community benefits are valued, environmental considerations dominate. The moderate standard deviation indicates some variability, possibly due to differing occupational or economic perspectives. This finding is critical for the research aim, as prioritizing sustainability supports the development of a balanced blue economy. The results highlight the need for policies that integrate environmental goals with economic and social outcomes to meet stakeholder expectations.

Table 3: Primary Reason for Sectoral Priority

Reason	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Environmental sustainability	80	54.79	1.58	0.77
Economic benefits	40	27.40		
Social impact	20	13.70		
Other	6	4.11		

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2025)

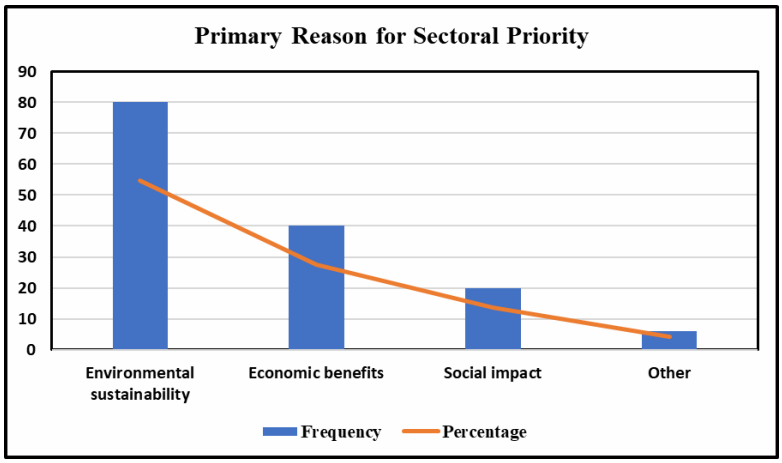

Figure 2: Primary Reason for Sectoral Priority
Source: Author's Fieldwork (2025)

Satisfaction with Sector Development

Table 4 shows that 41.10% of respondents are very satisfied and 47.95% are satisfied with the development of their prioritized sectors. This high satisfaction level supports the research objective of assessing stakeholder confidence in sectoral progress and it shows that stakeholders are optimistic about current developments. The strong satisfaction, particularly in renewable energy and tourism, suggests alignment between stakeholder expectations and perceived progress. The low percentage of dissatisfaction (4.11%) indicates that most respondents view sectoral development positively, likely due to visible investments in Lagos's maritime infrastructure. The results underscore the need for sustained investments to maintain and enhance sectoral progress.

Table 4: Satisfaction with Sector Development

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Very satisfied	60	41.10	1.92	0.71
Satisfied	70	47.95		
Neutral	10	6.85		
Dissatisfied	6	4.11		

Source: Author's Fieldwork (2025)

Relationship between stakeholders' sectoral priorities and the development of Nigeria's blue economy framework.

The null hypothesis ($H_0 3$) posits that the various sectoral priorities held by stakeholders, when considered together, have no statistically significant predictive power on their assessment of the development of Nigeria's blue economy framework. In other words, knowing what a stakeholder prioritizes does not help us predict how developed they believe the framework to be; any observed relationship is due to chance. The regression analysis on Table 5 shows an R-value of 0.718 indicates a strong positive multiple correlation between the five predictor variables and the dependent variable. The R-Square value of 0.515 means that approximately 51.5% of the variance in the assessment of the framework's development can be explained by the

combination of these five sectoral priorities. This is a substantial proportion, suggesting that stakeholders' priorities are a major factor in how they perceive the framework. The results of the multiple regression analysis provide a nuanced and powerful explanation for how stakeholders' interests shape their perception of Nigeria's blue economy framework. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that the framework is not viewed in a vacuum; its perceived development is deeply filtered through the lens of what each stakeholder deems important. The model explains over 51% of the variance, a strong indication that sectoral priorities are a dominant factor in this assessment.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.718[a]	.515	.498	1.24567

Predictors: (constant), Renewable Energy, Tourism and recreation, Fisheries, Shipping and Port, Marine Conservation.

The ANOVA Table 6 tests whether the regression model is statistically significant overall. The result is highly significant ($F(5, 140) = 44.48$, $p < .001$). This means that the combination of the five sectoral priorities significantly predicts the dependent variable. The model is a good fit for the data. Given that the overall regression model is statistically significant ($p < .001$) and that four of the five specific sectoral priorities show a significant relationship with the framework development variable, the null hypothesis ($H_0 3$) is hereby rejected. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between stakeholders' sectoral priorities and the development of Nigeria's blue economy framework.

Table 6: ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	345.22	5	69.044	44.48	< .001
	Residual	325.11	140	2.322		
	Total	670.33	145			

Predictors: (constant), Renewable Energy, Tourism and recreation, Fisheries, Shipping and Port, Marine Conservation.

Dependent Variable: Blue Economy Framework Development

The coefficient table (Table 7) shows a hierarchy of influence among sectors, with a constant of 2.105. The strongest positive predictor is Shipping and Port Operations ($\beta = .381$), indicating that stakeholders prioritizing this sector perceive Nigeria's Blue Economy framework as more developed, reflecting its bias toward traditional, capital-intensive maritime industries. Positive relationships also exist for Tourism and Recreation ($\beta = .285$) and Marine Conservation ($\beta = .251$), suggesting that the framework integrates economic diversification and sustainability goals. However, Fisheries Priority ($\beta = -.168$) shows a significant negative relationship, revealing that those emphasizing fisheries view the framework as underdeveloped and exclusionary, likely due to limited policy focus on artisanal fishing and local livelihoods. Renewable Energy showed no significant effect, implying minimal integration at this stage. Overall, the framework appears more responsive to industrial and environmental sectors than traditional ones, underscoring the need for inclusive policy reform to strengthen fisheries representation and equity in Nigeria's Blue Economy agenda.

Table 7: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients(B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (B)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.105	.455		4.626	< .001
Renewable Energy	0.085	.067	.072	1.269	.207
Tourism & Recreation	0.321	.074	.285	4.338	< .001
Shipping Port	0.412	.071	.381	5.803	< .001
Fisheries	-0.190	.069	-.168	-2.754	.007
Marine Conservation	0.258	.062	.251		

Dependent Variable: Blue Economy Development

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide compelling empirical evidence that the development of Nigeria's Blue Economy (BE) framework is deeply enmeshed in a political economy of sectoral prioritization. The multiple regression model was highly significant ($R^2 = 0.515$, $F(5, 140) = 44.48$, $p < .001$), confirming that 51.5% of the variance in how stakeholders perceive the framework's development is explained by their sectoral priorities.

This finding directly aligns with the theoretical stance of[8,4] who argue that blue economy governance is a socio-political process where policy outcomes reflect the interests of influential actors.

The analysis reveals a clear hierarchy of influence. The strongest positive predictor was Shipping & Port Operations ($\beta = .381$, $p < .001$), indicating that stakeholders prioritizing this established, capital-intensive sector perceive the framework as more developed. This finding corroborates the work of[15], who note that traditional maritime sectors often dominate policy due to their economic power and established lobbying influence. Similarly, positive relationships for Tourism & Recreation ($\beta = .285$, $p < .001$) and Marine Conservation ($\beta = .251$) suggest the framework is perceived to accommodate both economic diversification and global sustainability agendas, reflecting a coalition of modern economic and environmental interests as discussed by[6].

The most critical finding, however, is the significant negative relationship associated with Fisheries priority ($\beta = -.168$, $p = .007$). This shows a significant negative influence, indicating perceived marginalization of small-scale fishers, a pattern consistent with[14,15]. Stakeholders who prioritize fisheries perceive the framework as less developed, signaling a profound sense of exclusion. This creates a dangerous "blue washing" risk, where the BE agenda advances under a sustainability narrative while sidelining the most vulnerable resource-dependent communities. Renewable Energy was insignificant, revealing its limited policy visibility. Collectively, the findings reveal a framework perceived as favoring industrial and environmental agendas over local livelihoods, mirroring[8] on social inequities in BE governance.

V. Conclusion And Recommendation

This study concludes that the perception of Nigeria's Blue Economy framework is not neutral but is significantly shaped by a stakeholder's sectoral allegiance. The framework is perceived as advanced and legitimate by those aligned with powerful, capital-intensive sectors like shipping and emerging sectors like tourism and conservation. Conversely, it is viewed as underdeveloped and exclusionary by those who prioritize the fisheries sector, which is foundational to coastal livelihoods and food security. This imbalance reflects the dominance of elite-driven sectors and insufficient grassroots integration. Achieving an equitable and sustainable Blue Economy requires inclusive governance that reflects the needs of all stakeholders, especially artisanal fishers and coastal communities. Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

Integrating Pro-Fisheries Provisions Explicitly into the BE Framework: The Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy should draft and publicize an action plan within the national BE framework that addresses the specific challenges of the fisheries sector, including access rights, illegal fishing, and livelihood security, to directly counter the perceived marginalization.

Creating a Multi-Stakeholder Council for BE Oversight: Policymakers should establish a statutory body with mandatory representation from fisheries cooperatives, alongside shipping, tourism, and conservation sectors, to review and advise on all major BE policies, ensuring that the priorities of marginalized sectors are formally incorporated into governance.

Developing a "Sustainable Maritime Commerce" Certification Scheme: NIMASA, in partnership with the private sector, should create a certification and incentive program for shipping and port companies that adopt best environmental practices, thereby aligning the dominant sector's operations (Shipping/Ports) with the broader sustainability goals (Marine Conservation) prioritized by other stakeholders.

Launching Targeted BE Awareness Campaigns for Grassroots Sectors: Design and implement communication strategies specifically for fishing communities, using local languages and media to explain the provisions of the BE framework that are intended to benefit them, thereby bridging the perception gap and building trust in the policy process.

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