

POLICY (IN)CONSISTENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN AFRICA: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Olawale Olufemi AKINRINDE¹, Arnesh TELUKDARIE²

¹*University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa, Corner Kingsway and University Road, Auckland Park, 2092, el (011) 559-2637.*

Fax (011) 559-3956, oakinrinde@uj.ac.za

²*University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa, Corner Kingsway and University Road, Auckland Park, 2092, el (011) 559-2637.*

Fax (011) 559-3956, arnesht@uj.ac.za

How to cite: Akinrinde, O. O. & Telukdarie A. (2023). "Policy (In)Consistency and Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: A Systematic Literature Review". *Annals of Spiru Haret University. Economic Series*, 23(4), 129-158, doi: <https://doi.org/10.26458/2345>

Abstract

The attainment of Sustainable Development Goals hinges on the alignment of SDGs policies. This systematic literature review delves into the intricate relationship between policy inconsistency and sustainable development goals in Africa. Through this study, we unveil the challenges, implications, and the potential pathways that emerge at the intersection of policies and the quest for sustainable development in Africa. Our investigation takes a close look at the diverse dimensions of policy coherence, encompassing economic, social, and environmental considerations, and how these dimensions impact the progress of SDGs. Employing a systematic review approach, we meticulously filtered through 1745 results from databases, selecting 353 articles for a comprehensive analysis. Our findings underscore the significant role that policy inconsistency plays in impeding the attainment of SDGs in Africa. We propose an approach anchored on the alignment of SDGs policies and each goal of SDGs for the attainment of the 2030 SDGs agenda in Africa.

Keywords: *Policy (In)Consistency, Sustainable Development Goals, Institutional Capacity, Stakeholders' Engagements, Africa*

JEL Classification: D70; D72; I30; I38; J18; J38; Q01

Introduction

Sustainable development (SD) is a global priority, and African nations have committed to achieving the SDGs. However, policy inconsistency poses a significant challenge to the efforts geared towards the SDGs. Historically, the need to assess the successes and shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals billed to formally wind up in 2015 eventually triggered the convening of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The 2012 Rio de Janeiro conference eventually birthed the processes that informed the invention of the SDGs (Mukarram, 2020). The intent, in the aftermath of the conference, was to initiate a set of universal goals that meet the current environmental, economic, political and social needs of the world without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. Hence, as a creation of the United Nations General Assembly, the Sustainable Development Goals framework was created, among other things, to provide a global template for the efforts geared towards SD. Since its adoption in 2015, several countries of the world, including African countries, have elected to adopt and domesticate the SDGs, and leverage it as a development policy framework that can catalyze the much-needed development that has eroded their respective domains. Countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, among others, have, since 2015 shown considerable commitment and drive in the domestication process of the SDGs framework. For instance, within the Nigerian context, SDGs have been included into the Nigerian government's national development goals and programs. The "Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020" and its follow-up "Medium-Term National Development Plan 2021-2025" have expressly incorporated the SDGs' concepts, aims, and targets into the Nigeria's strategic development priorities. This is coupled with the creation of the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs (OSSAP-SDGs) that was intended to serve as the coordinating body responsible for mainstreaming, implementing, and monitoring the SDGs across various sectors of the economy. Similarly, within the South African context, the South African government has made extensive efforts to internalize and incorporate the SDGs into its national development framework, through policy alignment, stakeholder engagement, data collection, and public awareness. Specifically, the National Development Plan

(NDP) 2030 initiated by the South African government, which serves as the country's long-term development blueprint, aligns with several SDGs. The NDP-20230 prioritizes poverty reduction, inequality reduction, and sustainable economic growth, closely mirroring the objectives of the SDGs (Mukarram, 2020). This is in addition to the integration of the SDGs into various sectoral policies and strategies. For instance, the National Climate Change Response Policy and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan adequately align with SDG-13 (Climate Action) and SDG-15 (Life on Land), respectively. Within the Tunisian and Moroccan national domains, it is of similar experiences with regards to intentional efforts from the governments in internalizing the SDGs framework. It is on records that Tunisia has taken a number of steps to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its national development agenda. These initiatives illustrate Tunisia's commitment to solving diverse societal and sustainability issues while adhering to the global framework for sustainable development. For instance, Tunisia has adequately integrated the SDGs into its national development plans, notably the Development Plan 2016-2020 and the Development Plan 2021-2025. Tunisia's development goals are aligned with the SDGs' aims and targets in these programs. Similarly, the adopted National Strategy for Sustainable Development (SNDD) in Tunisia further reflects Tunisia's commitment to the SDGs (Mukarram, 2020).

Further to the aforementioned scenarios of African states' commitment to the ideals of the SDGs, most African states have either individually or within the framework of the African Union supported and advanced the cause of the SDGs from 2015 till. Chief among these commitments to the SDGs was the African Union's Agenda 2063. While being distinct from the SDGs, Agenda 2063 has many of the same ideas and objectives as the SDGs. This agenda has been utilized by African governments to advocate for sustainable development, poverty reduction, gender equality, and infrastructure development, thereby contributing to both continental and global SDGs initiatives. Coupled with Agenda 2063, African countries have considerably taken an active role in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process, which entails reporting to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on their progress toward SDG implementation. These assessment frameworks allow African countries to share their experiences, difficulties, and best practices, proving their commitment to global collaboration.

Related to the aforementioned, African governments have also developed continental partnerships and cooperation to jointly pursue the SDGs. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), for example, is an AU program that emboldens

African countries to examine each other's progress on governance, socioeconomic development, and other sustainability areas, as a result, contributing to SDG-related goals (Assuad, 2020). They have taken an active role in global climate change accords such as the Paris Agreement. Given how vulnerable they are to climate impacts, several African countries have campaigned for more climate action, adaptation, and resources to address climate-related concerns, in line with SDG 13 (Climate Action). They have facilitated peace and security as a vital component of sustainable development whilst engaging global platforms and peacekeeping missions to address African conflicts and stabilize the regions, thereby contributing to the achievement of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). These and many others are a handful of how Africa has facilitated and continues to promote the advancement of the SDGs continentally and globally.

In recent times, however, there have been empirical studies of policy inconsistencies within the larger spectrum of policy spaces aimed at actualizing the SDGs in most African countries. It is a given that policy and whatever happens within the policy space would have implications for the actualization of SDGs. Expectedly, studies have accounted for how policy consistency and inconsistency had affected the quest for SDGs. For instance, the contradiction between fossil fuel-based energy strategies adopted by several African countries vis a vis the SDG of climate action remains a global concern. Notwithstanding the international accords like the Paris Agreement, many African countries (Nigeria, South Africa, Angola, among others) continue to significantly subsidize fossil fuels, which contributes to carbon emissions. This discrepancy continues to jeopardize efforts to combat climate change and attain SDG 13 (Climate Action). Similarly, trade regulations that favor short-term economic advantages above fair development have the potential to worsen global disparities. Subsidies that favor developed-country agriculture, for example, can harm developing-country agriculture, undermining SDGs 1 (No Poverty) and 2 (Zero Hunger). Again, most deeply rooted social conventions and societal attitudes have led to inconsistent legislative approaches to gender equality. Some nations may have progressive gender legislation on paper, but experience implementation issues owing to cultural opposition, putting SDG 5 (Gender Equality) at risk.

Despite the desire and willingness of many African states to actualize the ideals of sustainable development, many of their policies have suggested the contrary, with several policies proving to be inconsistent with the quest for sustainable development goals. With abundant signposts and outcomes of several policies inconsistencies geared towards SDGs hitting the rock, there is yet no study that has

attempted to apply SLR in interrogating the nexus between policy inconsistency in Africa and the drive for the SDGs. This study attempts to fill the gap by employing SLR technique to synthesize findings of existing extant studies on the nexus between policy (in)consistency and the drive for SDGs in Africa. Thus, this study focuses on answering the following research questions:

What is the state of extant studies on the relationship between policy (in)consistency and SDGs in Africa?

Which Goals of the SDGs have been investigated within the broader spectrum of policy (in)consistency in Africa, and what is the frequency of these studies in literature, if any?

To what extent has policy inconsistencies affected the quest for SDGs in Africa based on literature as identified by Vosviewer?

What are the research methods in the published empirical studies on policy inconsistency and SDGs in Africa?

Literature Review

One of the first and comprehensive attempts to understudy how policy inconsistency had affected Africa's quest for SDGs was Armah and Baek's "Can the SDGs Promote Structural Transformation in Africa? An Empirical Analysis" in 2015 (Armah & Baek, 2015). For Armah and Baek (2015), SDGs including Structural transformation can only be optimized in Africa when policy interventions adopt an integrated approach to sustainable development that takes into account all of its dimensions. What this signposts, is the primacy of consistent policy direction on the quest for the actualization of SDGs in Africa. In this context, the failures of most African states to provide integrated policy direction and ensure consistent policy framework and direction within the pursuit of SDGs in Africa has been the most fatal albatross of the quest for SDGs. Corroborating Armah and Baeke's position, Jaiyesimi (2016) underscored the importance of consistent policy direction within the frame of concerted efforts and actions geared towards actualizing the SDGs in Africa. Specifically, Rotimi Jaiyesimi highlights that during the MDG period, separate UN agencies and states around the world, particularly African states, assumed ownership of specific objectives and implemented them with little concern for other targets. Some of the often mentioned problems to MDG implementation were a lack of clear advice on policy changes and how the objectives should be reached. The absence of direction led in various viewpoints, disregard for environmental objectives, interpretations, and an avenue for cynicism, particularly in low-resource nations. The lack of clear

guidance resulted in diverse opinions, disdain for environmental objectives, various interpretations, and room for skepticism, particularly in resource-constrained states in Africa (Jaiyesimi, 2016). For Jaiyesimi, achieving the SDGs from goal one to goal sixteen is not as important as how they are achieved (Jaiyesimi, 2016). This therefore brings to fore the place of policy direction which foregrounds the essence of SDG – 17. Through integrated and consistent policy framework harmonization at the level of state's policy formulation and global partnerships as contained in SDG – 17, the actualization of the SDGS would be more sustainable. In his words: the defining challenge of our era is to accelerate development that is economically sound, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. The Sustainable Development Goals embody nothing less and represent the best possible opportunity of all the complexities of economic development that we face today. The looming challenges in Africa are wide and deep and will require innovative responses that are embedded in partnerships and rooted in our shared values of justice, fairness, equity and solidarity. The time is now to ensure that Africa is not left behind in achieving the SDGs and the beneficiaries of this will be Africans and the people of the world at large. The measure of our success in implementing the sustainable development goals in Africa will be the attainment of the components of the 17 goals by 2030. It can be done, provided the key factors important for successful implementation of SDGs, high level of political support, ownership by the countries, institutional and human capacity development, inclusive of development process, mutual accountability, and policy reform are established and sustained. The success of the sustainable development goals in Africa will hinge on a credible means of implementation (Jaiyesimi, 2016: 16).

In the same vein, Giovanni Valensisi and Stephen Karingi have both investigated the necessity for a context-specific approach to achieving the SDGs in Africa. For these scholars, the lack of consistency between global goals and regional realities, as well as policy inconsistencies in general, has hampered SDGs implementation in Africa (Valensisi and Karingi, 2017). It's no surprise that they call for regionally customized policy measures that take into account Africa's distinct social, economic, and environmental situations into the mainstream of SDG implementation and policy direction in Africa. Thus, for them, the continent may better handle its growth difficulties and maximize the effect of SDG activities by using a more targeted approach (Valensisi and Karingi, 2017).

Similarly, situating the challenges of SDGs in Ghana within the frame of policy inconsistency, Abane (2018) posits that poverty continues to persist in Ghana and indeed, in Sub-Saharan Africa due to the failure of the African government in

ensuring consistency in the SDGs policy direction. While Ghana, like other African nations, in her view, had made significant progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, the country's development results have been marked by significant discrepancies in policies relating to diverse natural zones: forest, coastal, and dry savanna sectors. The forest zone, for instance, which has a high agricultural potential, has lower poverty rates, whereas the dry savanna zone, which has poor agricultural output, has concentrated poverty. This was most likely due to government failings caused by policy inconsistencies (Abena, 2018).

Interrogating the relationship between policy inconsistency and SDGs, Ajulor (2018) highlights the difficulties that African countries, notably Nigeria, have in adopting policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Economic recession, crime, corruption, and poor leadership are all challenges that contribute to national insecurity, poverty and lac of SDGs in the African continent. He underlined the need of working together, especially with regards to policy direction and harmonization with a view to addressing the numerous SDGs difficulties in the continent. Ajulor (2018) further examined the challenges related with policy implementation and SDGs in Africa, with a particular focus on Nigeria. He achieved this by leveraging questionnaire survey was and hypotheses testing. The acquired data was analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), and key informant interviews were employed as well. Further to his findings, Ajulor (2018), argued that Nigeria and many other African countries are now facing economic downturns as a result of policy implementation and consistency issues. These obstacles, for him, include unrealistic target establishment, political bias, neglecting policy receivers, and failing to account for the policy's surrounding environment, among others. According to this study, Africa should create achievable policy objectives. African nations must begin to rethink the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to successfully include policy consistency in all spheres of the SDGs (Ajulor, 2018). Corruption, that has been the bane of policy consistency in Africa, must be given higher priority throughout Africa. Policies developed for execution by African states should ensure policy components and consistency at the state, municipal and other governance levels.

Mohamed Farah and Alvedi Sabani further offer an analysis of the current literature on African SDGs and governance issues in their seminal work entitled "Towards Sustainable Development Goals: A Literature Review and a Conceptual Framework of Governance Issues in Africa". The fundamental goal of their study was to evaluate governance and policy issues within the context of SDGs

implementation and state in Africa. Their study contributed to the corpus of multidisciplinary knowledge on SDGs and policy governance. By incorporating lessons from many multidisciplinary sources, their findings demonstrated the possibility of activating successful SDGs actualization and governance when there is policy consistency. In light of their findings, Farah and Sabani (2019) proposed a functional understanding of governance and policy consistency as a continuous and long-term policy direction that acts as a diverse steering mechanism for the attainment of the SDGs. And, from a practical point of view, their study provides a conceptual framework intended to improve the understanding of how important concerns and impediments affect African governments' ability to coordinate governance-related decision-making.

In another seminal work on SDGs and the primacy of policy consistency, Davies, Nwankwo, Olofinnade & Michaels (2019) further highlight the importance of SDGs in national growth and improving people's lives. X-raying the Nigerian experience, they implicated not just lack of policy inconsistency in the quest for SDGs in Nigeria but also the prevalence of poor infrastructure, weak accountability, insufficient water and electricity supply, limited human capital development, inadequate transportation and communication, illiteracy, and environmental degradation as impediments towards SDG actualization in Nigeria. For Davies et. al. (2019), electricity is quite pivotal in achieving Nigeria's SDGs. Progress toward the various SDG targets is heavily dependent on boosting power access across the country. The SDGs have been approved by UN member nations, including Nigeria, to eradicate poverty, protect the environment, and promote general prosperity via sustainable development. Each objective, which includes topics such as healthcare, clean water, education, innovation, and infrastructure, has targets for the next 15 years. However, power is an essential prerequisite for all 17 SDGs. High energy consumption has always been associated with affluent cultures, and a country's economic viability is dependent on the quality of its electrical supply (Cheng, Liu, Wang, Cui, Li, 2021). For them, despite the fact that they are not mandated, SDGs in Nigeria and most African countries have lacked specific implementation requirements in terms of policy direction and consistency. In Nigeria, successful SDG implementation would therefore be dependent on the government's commitment to ensure policy consistency in finance, fiscal prudence, stable governance, effective policies, and functional infrastructure. This would translate to sustainable benefits that may include increased corporate growth, more employment, educational possibilities, environmental friendliness, and higher financial returns. Beyond the realm of policy, addressing electricity issue, for

Davies et al. (2019), is of paramount necessity given the role electricity plays in economic empowerment and activities of the people. Communication, and adequate rural accessibility are critical in the drive towards SDGs.

While multiple studies have used diverse techniques to investigate the policy inconsistency within the context of SDGs in Africa, Systematic Literature Reviews (SLRs) are rather sparse in this area.[TK1] Hence, this study attempts to extend the frontiers of knowledge on SDGs and policy through the agency of SLR.

Empirical Gap

While extant literature on SDGs and policy in Africa from 2015 to 2022 have focused more on the relationship between SDGs and policy, an apparent gap continues to exist in the body of knowledge with regards to how policy inconsistency, in another concept, contradiction has affected the quest for SDGs in Africa since 2015. In specific, there is a large absence of any systematic review of these policy inconsistencies and contradictions within the context of each goal of the Sustainable Development Goals as enunciated by the United Nations in 2015. This study therefore presents a systematic review of these policy contradictions in Africa within the context of each goal of the SDGs from 2015 to 2022.

Research Methodology

An (SLR) enables the identification, selection, and critical appraisal of research to address clearly formulated research questions, based on a clearly defined protocol. On the other hand, bibliometric analysis is a scientific computer-assisted review methodology that identifies core research themes, and interrelationships between these themes, using publications related to a given topic or field, as data sources. Based on these merits, by leveraging the combined endeavors of bibliometric analysis and SLR, this research seeks to unearth essential research insight on the aforementioned empirical gap - policy contradictions in Africa within the context of the SDGs. The sequential steps of the methodology protocol illustrated in figure 1, are inspired by the strategy by Kılıç Depren *et al.*, 2022. These steps are research scope determination, keywords identification, data collection, bibliometric analysis and knowledge synthesis, and are outlined as shall be illustrated.



Figure 1: Sequential steps of the research methodology protocol

Scope determination

The initial step of an SLR is scope determination of the research area of concern, with an aim to acquire the background context of the research area (Kılıç Depren *et al.*, 2022). Accordingly, given the multidisciplinary manner of this research study as informed by the empirical gap, the scope is thus delineated to: policy inconsistency in Africa and Africa’s drive for the SDGs. This scope thus informs the data collection and analysis steps which are outlined as shall be illustrated.

Identification of keywords.

Upon scope determination, there is need to identify keywords, which facilitate the data collection step (Araujo *et al.*, 2017). A preliminary literature review is thus performed using peer-reviewed articles, to acquire background knowledge on the aforementioned scope, and identify keywords with the highest occurrence. At this stage of preliminary information gathering, publications are not screened for relevance. Accordingly, the identified keywords are *policy, policy inconsistency, SDGs, SDG 1, SDG 2, and SDG 3 to 17*”. Upon identification of the keywords, the keywords are in turn used to develop a keyword search string, which is used for data collection in the form of an advanced SLR, as shall be illustrated. The keywords search string is as follows: TITLE-ABS-KEY (“policy” OR “policy inconsistency” AND “SDGs” OR “SDG 1” OR “SDG 2” OR “SDG 3 to 17”).

Data collection via the advanced SLR

Upon generating the keywords search string, there is need to conduct an advanced SLR for purposes of data collection (Kılıç Depren *et al.*, 2022). The data collected is in the form of peer-reviewed publications, whereby these publications are searched and downloaded from research databases using the keyword search string. The search is limited to journals, conference, and book chapters in the

SDGs, and written in the English language. The databases which are queried as data collection sources, using the keyword search string include Scopus, Science Direct, and Google Scholar. Further, these databases are chosen due to their extensive filtering options, which include author name, publication year, topic area, document type, source title, publishing stage, keyword, affiliation, funding sponsor, source type, and language. Upon querying the databases and obtaining research publications, the PRISMA protocol is adopted to eliminate publications and retain the most relevant ones. This is done via deduplication of the publications using Zotero software, followed by elimination of publications based on title or abstract relevance by the authors of this study. Upon eliminating the publications using PRISMA, the remaining publications are thus utilised for bibliometric analysis as shall be illustrated.

Bibliometric analysis

After obtaining the relevant publications via the SLR, bibliometric analysis is then done to identify the trends and themes in the publications pertaining to the research scope, using VOSviewer analysis software package. Bibliometric analysis is chosen based on its merits of leveraging various statistical and quantitative studies so as to assess bibliometric data. This is done through the assessment of qualitative data from the downloaded research publications, converting it into quantitative data, and thus developing a network diagram of all the related themes of the research scope presented as nodes. Because bibliometric analysis has been successfully applied as a quantitative review methodology in research fields such as the humanities, using data sourced from diverse citation indexes, this justifies its purposeful usage for this study.

Synthesis of results

Informed by the key essential themes generated from the bibliometric analysis, the key trends on the research area are identified via reviewing the publications.

Results

Preliminary literature review informed the keywords for utilisation as a search string in the SLR using Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, as sources of data. The keyword search string of TITLE-ABS-KEY ("policy" OR "policy inconsistency" AND "SDGs" OR "SDG 1" OR "SDG 2" OR "SDG 3 to 17") was obtained using a combination of the keywords with the highest occurrence during preliminary literature review, as aforementioned. Upon querying the databases using this keyword search string, the following was obtained:

- Querying of the databases and exclusion of ineligible publications based on the 2015 - 2023-year range resulted in an initial 1915 publications as follows: 1099 from Scopus, 806 from ScienceDirect and 10 from Google Scholar.
- The combined publications above were imported into Zotero software for de-duplication and retention of versions with more metadata, resulting in 1745 publications.
- Parallel screening based on relevance of the title of the article resulted in 800 publications.
- Parallel screening based on the relevance of the abstract was done by the authors, thus retaining 353 publications for full text review and analysis with VOSviewer.

The summary of this information is as displayed in table 1.

Table 1: Summary of data collected, and data collection sources

Item	Number
Downloaded articles downloaded Scopus	1099
Downloaded articles from ScienceDirect	806
Downloaded articles from Google Scholar	10
Total articles	1915
Total articles after de-duplication via Zotero software	1745
Total articles after exclusion based on article relevance of article title	800
Total articles after exclusion based on relevance of article abstract	353

The 353 articles were imported into VOSviewer software for bibliometric analysis, resulted in the extraction of 121 research themes, densified around 6 colour-coded clusters illustrated in Fig. 1.

Table 2: Top 26 elements of the policy inconsistency and SDGs ecosystem

	Element	Cluster	Total link strength	Occurrences
1	sustainable development	2	1008	303
2	sustainable development goal	3	588	107
3	Sustainable development goals	3	560	119
4	climate change	1	452	188
5	sustainability	1	413	250
6	sdgs	1	357	146
7	sub-saharan africa	2	313	100
8	renewable energy	3	248	103
9	economic development	3	244	34
10	food security	1	241	83
11	planning	5	216	37
12	health policy	2	205	33
13	economic growth	3	196	45
14	poverty	1	188	64
15	health care policy	2	184	25
16	carbon dioxide	3	183	24
17	united nations	2	179	26
18	economics	2	172	28
19	carbon emission	3	171	22
20	policy making	2	163	21
21	global health	2	154	32
22	agriculture	1	148	65
23	energy policy	4	138	37
24	developing countries	2	137	41
25	policy	2	136	47
26	environmental economics	3	136	17

Whilst it is essential to portray the visibility of the elements that constitute the ecosystem of SDGs and policy, it is further essential to portray the interdependencies between these elements. Table 3 illustrates an nxn Adjacency Matrix which maps the elemental pairs via the parameter nodal-to-nodal link strength. This parameter illustrates the extent of the interdependencies between all the elements as per the bibliometric analysis. Only a portion of the entire nxn matrix has been extracted for illustration purposes. For example, the nodal-to-nodal link strength of 45 between sustainable development and sustainable development goals illustrates a strong correlation between these two elements of the model. This strong correlation agrees with the knowledge by Abdulqadir (2023) who mentions the need by global regions to optimise sustainable development policies, in pursuit of sustainable development. The strong correlation of 20 between *sustainable development goal* and *sustainable development goals* attests to the urgent need for a paradigm shift and gravitate towards holistic policy analysis in favour of siloed policy analysis. This is based on the interrelationships between sustainable goals, and thus looking at them in silo underestimates the interrelationships in-between. Overall, the mapping of the elements in the model based on nodal-to-nodal link strength thus provides entry point insight towards the accurate capture and representation of the interdependencies between these elements for modelling purposes.



Table 3: nxn Adjacency Matrix

		Elements																		
		planning	policy	policy making	poverty	poverty alleviation	public health	public policy	remote sensing	renewable energy	resilience	risk assessment	sanitation	sdg	sustainability	sustainability assessment	sustainable consumption	sustainable development	sustainable development goal	sustainable development goals
Elements	planning	0	5	3	1	1	1	5	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	0	1	28	11	12
	policy		0	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	2	0	1	1	4	0	0	8	4	7
	policy making			0	1	0	3	3	1	2	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	16	9	5
	poverty				0	3	0	2	1	2	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	14	10	9
	poverty alleviation					0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	5	4	1
	public health						0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	11	6	7
	public policy							0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	13	5	5
	remote sensing								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	2
	renewable energy									0	0	0	0	2	9	1	0	17	10	6
	resilience										0	0	0	1	7	0	0	4	1	2
	risk assessment											0	0	1	1	0	0	2	4	1
	sanitation												0	0	5	0	0	9	5	4
	sdg													0	5	0	0	5	2	1
	sustainability														0	3	0	21	11	13
	sustainability assessment															0	0	6	3	3
	sustainable consumption																0	2	1	0
	sustainable development																	0	38	45
	sustainable development goal																		0	20
	sustainable development goals																			0

Based on the themes illustrated from the VOSviewer analysis, it is essential to synthesise the key research trends and patterns, as informed by the densification of the research themes from the VOSviewer analysis. This synthesis is discussed as shall be illustrated in no particular order.

Thematic Discussion of Findings

Poverty and Hunger

A synthetization of the findings of studies reviewed from 2015 to 2023 from Scopus, Science-direct and Google scholar demonstrates a common position on the severity of poverty and hunger in Africa. Having occurred about sixty-fourth times in the VOSviewer's analysis and of the reviewed studies from 2015 to 2023, it further underlines and demonstrates the import and excruciating effects of poverty and hunger as SDGs 1 and 2 in Africa, most especially, in the sub-Saharan Africa, than any other region (Asongu & Eita, 2023). Although, considerable strides have been made in reducing extreme poverty and hunger, but a large portion of the population still lives below the poverty line as captured in most of the studies (Aiyar & Ebeke, 2020). Challenges implicated in these studies include high inequality, lack of access to quality education, healthcare, and nutritious food (Uzoma & Onor, 2019; Aiyar & Onor). Similarly, as pointed out by Uzoma and Onor (2019), the SDGs, which were intended to be a worldwide endeavor to relieve poverty, achieve a global average performance and bring about overall achievement across countries fell short of the broader goal of eradicating poverty for all, especially in Africa. Arising from this findings, a pertinent question that needs to be asked is: with the SDGs being over eight years old already as of 2023, can poverty and hunger as represented by SDG 1 & 2 initiative succeed across Africa, in the face of burgeoning policy contradictions and inconsistencies in the policy, political, economic, environmental leadership space in Africa? The answer is in the affirmative. With several examples abounding, there is absolutely no doubt that the current drive of African states' drives towards SDGs one and two is headed for the rocks (Koff, 2021, Asongu & Eita, 2023). One of the many instances of policy contradictions within the framework for the actualization of SDGs one and two revealed in the findings was the recent fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria (Asongu & Eita, 2023; Asongu & Nting, 2022). With over 80 percent of the Nigerian population still dependent on the fossil fuel as a source of energy for their economic pursuits, transport needs, among others, the removal of a government subsidy on a basic commodity as fuel on the grounds of corruption in the implementation of the subsidy policy is only bound to result in a predetermined

outcome: the further impoverishment of the poor masses in Nigeria with attendant high cost of living. Little wonder why since the removal of the fuel subsidy, inflation has skyrocketed (See Table 3 below). Corroborating the findings from the SLR, further records have shown that Nigeria's annual inflation rate has increased for the sixth straight month in July 2023, hitting 24.08%, its highest level since September 2005, above expectations of 23.7%. The primary cause of this rise was the growing cost of food and non-alcoholic drinks and other categories such as oil and fats, bread and cereals, fish, potatoes, yam and other tubers, fruits, meat, vegetables, milk, cheese, and eggs. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) also increased by 2.9% month on month, following a 2.1% increase in June. Furthermore, core inflation, which excludes volatile goods, increased somewhat in July, hitting 20.8% from 20.3% in June (Trading Economics, 2023).

Table 3

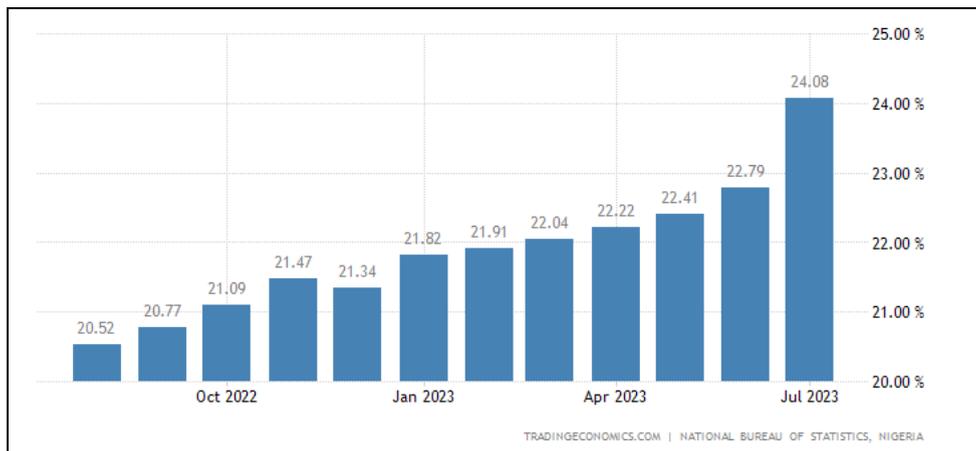


Table 3 further demonstrates the upward rise in inflationary numbers in Nigeria in the month of July, 2023, when the fuel subsidy was sharply removed. Goods that were hither to within the purchasing powers of the masses especially, have become not-for-the-poor goods. As a result of the increment in transportation, majority of the masses in Nigeria are faced the challenge of unaffordable and exorbitant transport fare in Nigeria. The implication of this, put together, is the negative impact the policy contradiction is having on the drive of SDGs one and two. In a nutshell, the more such of these policy paralyses continue to be entertained within

the SDGs framework in Africa, the slimmer the chances for the actualization of SDGs one and two become. Another policy contradiction and inconsistency revealed arising from the synthetization of the findings is in the quest for SDGs, most especially in the area of states pardon of criminal politicians. The relationship between corruption and underdevelopment in Africa is a settled debate in the literature (Asongu & Nting. 2022; Akinrinde and Oyetunbi, 2021). It has therefore become worrisome that despite the latent and manifest declarations and commitment of most African governments towards the actualization of SDGs in Africa, they are still very enmeshed in the heinous act of extending to criminal politicians that have been guilty of corruption related offices by a competent law court state pardon. The state pardon usually accords the convicted criminal immunity from serving jail terms or being liable to other legal consequences of their offences. A case relevant here is the state pardon extended to convicted criminal cum former state governors Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyame of Plateau and Taraba state in Nigeria (Premium Times, April 14, 2022). One punchy implication of this is the psychological endorsement that usually greets such a reality. Aside the stolen money which would ultimately translate to reduced resources for public service and developmental projects, many public and political servants are eventually emboldened by the possibility of state pardon in the event of court's conviction upon being found guilty. Hence, in its entirety, state pardon amounts to nothing other policy inconsistency on the part of most African governments in their drive for SDGs one and two. By and large, the general consensus from this SLR is the realization that No Poverty and Zero Hunger as represented by SDG 1 and 2 are still very much far away from being a reality. This, therefore, is not unconnected to the history of consistent misplaced policy action in the drive for SDGs in Africa as evidenced by instances of how policy paralysis and inconsistencies has interfered negatively in the wheels of SDGs.

Health and Well-being

One of the dominant themes from the output of the analysis of VOXviewer is Health and Well-being, SDG - 3. Basically, the state of health and the well-being of most African people, as contextualized and revealed by findings of the reviewed studies, have been somewhat unpalatable over time, especially from the beginning from 2015, the year of the commencement of the adoption of the SDGs world over. From child mortality to maternal health and to doctor-patient ratio, the health and well-being status of many African states leave much to be desired. This perhaps accounts for the high rate of studies that have been conducted on health and

wellbeing and the high presence of both health and wellbeing in the VOXviewer's analysis. It further underscores why Adeyeye, Adebayo-Oyetoro, and Tiamiyu (2017) reveal in their studies that several African countries still struggle with high disease burdens, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and limited access to essential medicines and affordable healthcare system. While in their bid to achieve health and wellbeing among their citizenry - SDG 3, several African governments have identified with the global imperativeness to put in place functional and affordable healthcare system which is the hallmark of SDGs three. For instance, in order to achieve comprehensive vaccination coverage, the Nigerian government has been participating in a number of health immunization initiatives (Mahajan, 2019). The National Program on Immunization (NPI), for example, strives to raise immunization rates for preventable illnesses including polio, measles, Covid-19 and others. In addition, Nigeria has implemented measures to reduce maternal and child mortality. The "Saving One Million Lives" program, for example, focuses on delivering basic medical services to pregnant women and children under the age of five. This is coupled with the intention to revitalize the primary healthcare and other health system through the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA) also continues to seek to promote community access to basic healthcare services. Also, within the South African context, South Africa has one of the world's highest rates of HIV/AIDS prevalence. To manage the disease and limit its spread, the South African government has undertaken extensive HIV/AIDS awareness programs and offers anti-retroviral medication to those living with HIV at no cost. Despite these commitments and policy directions, the quest for good health and wellbeing - SDG 3 in Africa continues to be implicated by a number of policy inconsistencies and contradictions (Mahajan, 2019). A point of convergence in the reviewed studies through SLR further demonstrates that prominent among these policy contradictions is the issue of continued policy drive of most African political and public servants in patronizing medical tourism away from their home states. For instance, in Nigeria, former president Muhammadu Buhari had earlier, before leaving office, spent 225 days abroad, visiting over 40 countries for medical checkups and tourism (Punch, 4th December, 2022). This absurd policy inconsistency and paralysis is not peculiar to Nigeria. Majority of African policy and political leaders, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to run away from health systems they have provided for the general masses. This therefore suggests that most African policy and political leaders have either paid or continue to pay lip

service to the quest for SDG 3 or constrained, in whatever guise, to see to the actualization of SDG 3 in Africa.

Education

A systematic synthetization of the findings of the reviewed papers here clearly reveal that in many African nations, access to decent education has continued to remain a difficult, elusive and herculean task, particularly for girls and children from underprivileged and underrepresented areas (Santos & Pekkola, 2023; Silva & Oliveira, 2021; Sultana, 2019). While education as SDG 4 has featured in several studies and as captured by the VOXviewer's analysis in this study, in terms of policy, education continues to take the backseat in most African countries. Although, enrollment numbers have increased minimally, challenges such as high school-dropout rates and poor educational quality in almost African countries. For instance, within the Nigerian context, the Nigerian government, in order to guarantee that every child has access to basic education, developed the Universal Basic Education initiative. This policy was to make education free and obligatory for the first nine years of schooling. Coupled with this, the Almajiri Education was also created by the Nigerian government to address the challenges of illiteracy among children in Northern Nigeria whom have been abandoned. It was designed to integrate traditional Islamic education with formal education to improve the children's overall learning experience. Similarly, the South African government has put in place a few policy measures and directions in the drive for SDG 4. Chief among these policies is the Early Childhood Development Policy initiated by the South African government to provide quality early learning experiences to young South African children (Fosu, 2015). This policy has aided in the enrolment of several South African children into early childhood schools, among others. Further to the aforementioned, the government has provided bursaries and scholarships to financially disadvantaged South African students in order for them to pursue higher education. Similarly, Tunisia in the North African region, the Tunisian has encouraged scientific research and innovation in higher education institutions, comprehensively fostering a culture of knowledge creation and dissemination (Fosu, 2015).

However, while the governments of many African states recognize the value of education and have committed to spending a considerable share of the national budget to it, actual funding distribution has continued to frequently fall short of the UNESCO-recommended 25 percent threshold (Asongu & Eita, 2023). This SLR, agreeing with existing studies, believes that with the continued variability and

policy inconsistency in most African states' educational drive, SDG 4, and national educational budget continually falling below the UNESCO-recommended 25%, excellent education programs and SDG 4. With its connection to others themes, education continues to be one of the dominant themes in SDGs both in extant literature and policy framework.

Gender Equality

Gender inequality remains a big concern in Africa, with limited access to economic opportunities, political representation, and education, most especially among women and girls. Although, majority of the reviewed papers pointed out that several African countries have keyed into the ideals of SDG 5 by legislating laws and bringing up policies that can facilitate the prompt actualization of the SDG 5, gender equality within the governance, social, policy, political, economic and environmental space in Africa has remained elusive (Asongu & Eita, 2023). This in part explains why it occurred twenty-five times in the VOSviewer's analysis. In Nigeria, for instance, the Nigerian government has passed legislation and policies to combat violence against women, and notably among these policies, is the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, which aims to prevent and respond to different types of gender-based violence. Coupled with this, the government has provided enabling environment for civil society in the realm of gender equality advocacy and campaign against Gender-based Violence (GBV) to thrive. Initiatives such as the National Women Empowerment Fund and the intervention programs of the Central Bank of Nigeria strive to give financial assistance and resources to women entrepreneurs and small company owners. This is in addition to the National Gender Policy on women's political representation in political positions which aims to bring about at least 35% representation of women in government positions (Asongu & Eita, 2023). Similarly, in South Africa, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) and the National Council on Gender-Based Violence initiatives, for example, contain measures to enhance gender equality by encouraging women's involvement in economic activities and company ownership. In Tunisia and other North African countries, the reality is quite different. Despite the decision of these countries to key into SDG 5 and domesticate it internally, policies that deprive the women the opportunity of participating in politics and other legitimate areas remain in place. For instance, despite the enactment of laws like the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act and the Child Rights Act in African countries, there are inconsistencies in enforcement, and some cultural practices that discriminate against women continue

to persist as alluded to by Ruwanpura (2016). This explains why customary practices that allow for early marriage and restricted educational possibilities for females can contrast laws that create a legal minimum age for marriage and encourage education for girls. In addition, while the right of the women over their body is undeniable, in countries such as Nigeria, a woman is liable to jail term if she engages in abortion, prostitution and others. This contradicts the posture of the African government to SDG 5 and underline many of the contradictions in the drive for SDG 5, as revealed by the synthetization of findings from the reviewed papers (Ruwanpura, 2016; Asongu & Eita, 2023).

Clean Water and Sanitation

Another recurring theme as depicted from the Voxviewer's analysis is the issue of Clean Water and Sanitation. Apparently, its importance extends to all the other SDGs. This is premised on the reality that without clean water and proper sanitation system, life itself becomes hellish and inhabitable for humans. Hence, the recurrence and attention commanded in the Voxviewer's analysis by the theme clean water and sanitation.

Furthermore, access to clean water and sanitation system remains a significant challenge in many African countries, particularly in the sub-Saharan areas. Lack of proper sanitation facilities contributes to health issues. In order to facilitate the drive for SDG 6, many African countries have been initiating policies. As an instance, in South Africa, Operation Phakisa was initiated as a government initiative aimed at fast-tracking the delivery of key services, including water and sanitation (Asongu & Eita, 2023). The policy focuses on addressing infrastructure challenges and accelerating water-related projects in Africa. However, while policies emphasize equitable access to clean water and sanitation for all, disparities persist between urban and rural areas, with urban areas having better access to water and sanitation services (Merry, 2019). Water services have, thus, become costly for most areas in rural African communities while policies aimed at ensuring cheap water services continue to oppose by uneven price structures. Thus, buttressing the existing findings from existing studies.

Renewable Energy

Prominent and highly recurrent in the analytical output of Voxviewer is the theme of renewable energy. This is surprising given the level of indispensability and importance it has assumed in recent times and studies having occurred in the VOSviewer's analysis about one hundred and three times. The challenge of affordable, clean and renewable energy not only in developing regions such as

Africa but also in the western world. Many African countries continue to face energy poverty, with limited access to reliable and clean energy sources (Abdulqadir, 2023). Most studies reveal that efforts to expand energy access and transition to renewable energy are still very low and slow in Africa (Salahuddin, Ali., Sc, Vink & Gow, 2019; Salahuddin, Gow, Ali, Hossain, Al-Azami, Akbar & Gedikli, 2019b). Despite legislation encouraging the use of renewable energy, South Africa's energy system remains strongly reliant on coal, contradicting attempts to create cleaner and more sustainable energy generation (Koff, 2021). Currently, several homes in South Africa are being faced with the load-shedding of electricity power even with the current government policy on affordable, clean and sustainable energy. Similarly, While South Africa has produced an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) to guide energy development, mismatches between IRP goals and actual investment decisions might stymie clean energy aspirations. In the same vein, the state-owned electrical utility in South Africa, Eskom, has suffered financial challenges in recent times, limiting its capacity to invest in renewable energy infrastructure, which is incompatible with the country's clean energy policy (Buyana, 2020). In Nigeria, the same reality continues to manifest. Despite measures aimed at providing affordable energy with a view to achieving SDG 7, Nigeria has, in contradiction to its commitment to SDG 7, implemented a removal policy on the fuel subsidies which is currently resulting into skewed energy pricing, wasteful energy consumption, and a stifling of investments in energy sources.

Economic Growth and Employment

Supporting one of the dominant themes within the context of SDGs and policy in Africa, the VOSviewer's analysis conducted reveal the primacy of the issue of economic growth and employment. The synthetization of findings of studies in this study further reveal the prevalence of stunted economic growth and high unemployment rate in sub-Saharan Africa (Asongu & Eita, 2023; Rai, (Brown & Ruwanpura, 2019). While policies exist to assist the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises in Africa, uneven access to funding, limited infrastructure, and regulatory impediments have been implicated as impediments towards economic growth and employment in Africa. Again, minimum wage policies in Africa was again identified as another impediment to sustainable economic growth and high employment rate (Asongu & Eita, 2023). An instance projected in Asongu and Eita' study were the minimum wages in South Africa and Nigeria pegged at R25,42 per hour and #33,000 per month respectively (Asongu & Eita, 2023). The

implication of this is that the drive for SDG 8, which is decent work and economic growth, is, figuratively, headed for the south. Hence, no economic growth and sustainable employment can be achieved when the people are not considered worthy of being paid a sustainable living wage.

Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Although recurrent, the state of industry, innovation and infrastructure across Africa remains one of the poorest across the world. Despite being critical for Africa's long-term development and sustainable prosperity, the general consensus in existing studies is the continued lack and absence of adequate industrial capacity and infrastructure in Africa (Abdulqadir, 2023; Muza & Debnath, 2021). Hence, in order to promote economic growth, and strengthen Africa's industrial capacity, investments in technology and transportation networks are required. Similarly, discrepancies in energy supply, since frequent power outages and limited access to electricity hinder industrial progress, aligning with existing studies must be fixed.

Sustainable Cities and Communities

Rapid urbanization in Africa presents challenges related to infrastructure, housing, and environmental sustainability, as revealed by literature (Abdulqadir, 2023; Asongu & Eita, 2023). Informal settlements and inadequate urban planning were implicated by existing studies as common issues facing the realization of SDG 12.

Further, strategies aimed at strengthening transportation systems may be undermined by insufficient investments in public transit, resulting in traffic congestion and air pollution in cities (Tiep, Huan & Hong, 2021). Policies aimed also at safeguarding cultural heritage may be undermined by urban development initiatives that fail to prioritize cultural preservation in Africa, resulting in the loss of historical places and cultural identity.

Climate Change/Action

Africa is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Adaptation and mitigation strategies are crucial for building resilience and minimizing environmental risks as revealed by the study of Rosati & Faria (2019). Notwithstanding climate action agreements of African governments, the continuation of fossil fuel subsidies runs counter to attempts to cut greenhouse gas emissions and shift to renewable energy sources. Inconsistent planning of land uses, which encourages urban sprawl and the conversion of green spaces for development, has led to increased carbon emissions and decreased climate

resilience into the environment (McNeill, 2019). Discrepancies between climate policy and those in other sectors such as energy, agriculture, and transportation might stymie a comprehensive strategy to tackling climate change. As revealed by the VOXviewer's analysis, climate change has over time been one of the central and fundamental theme in the parlance of SDGs. This is further buttressed by the over seven hundred linkages between climate change and other important elements of sustainable development. While it has featured in most studies and extant literature, its connection with policy inconsistency has rather been sparsely explored. Rosati & Faria (2019), Abdulqadir (2023) and Asongu & Eita (2023) attempted in their study to look at climate change and action holistically. However, its nexus with policy consistency or inconsistency and vice versa remain yet an underexplored research terrain.

Life Below Water and Life on Land

Although, this was less recurrent in existing studies and from the VOXviewer's analysis, life below water and on land is a very critical and vital element of the United Nations SDGs. Biodiversity loss, deforestation, and unsustainable land use are pressing concerns that have been implicated in existing studies as some of the challenges of actualizing the goal of life below water and on land. (McNeill, 2019). Conservation efforts and sustainable land management practices are important for safeguarding ecosystems and wildlife. Coastal development strategies have affected efforts to maintain marine ecosystems, resulting in habitat destruction, pollution, and biodiversity loss (McNeill, 2019).

Conclusion

This study has underscored the urgent need to address policy inconsistency in Africa in order to ensure the effective realization of the SDGs. It further emphasizes the importance of policy coherence, coordinated governance, and evidence-based decision-making for sustainable development in the quest for SDGs in Africa. By addressing policy inconsistency, African countries can pave the way for a more coherent and integrated approach to achieving the SDGs. Having extended the frontiers of existing literature on SDGs and policy in Africa through the employment of the SLR technique in interrogating the current state of nexus between the two phenomena in Africa, this study has further offered an alternative the empirical research-dominated literature by offering a systematic review and synthetization of the findings of existing empirical studies on SDGs and policy in Africa.

Suggestion for further Studies

This SLR has been able to explore the current state of knowledge on the SDGs and policy in Africa. While the extant literature, as revealed by the SLR, is in no short supply of studies on SDGs and policy from a generic point of view, only a few studies had attempted an exploration of the nexus between SDGs and policy (in)consistency in Africa, especially studies that SLR. This SLR has attempted to fill this gap by employing SLR in exploring the nexus between SDGs and policy (in)consistency. Hence, future studies may consider an empirical research and/or SLR in exploring each goals of the SDGs and policy (in)consistency using either qualitative or computational methods or both.

References

- [1] Ajulor, O.V. (2018). The Challenges of Policy Implementation in Africa and Sustainable Development Goals. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(3),1497-1518.
- Abane, J.A. (2018). Transitioning to SDGs in Sub-Saharan Africa: Assessing National Context Variations and Disparities on the MDG#1 in Ghana. *Global Social Welfare*, 5, pp 167–178, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-017-0087-3>.
- [2] Abdulqadir, I. A. (2023). Urbanization, renewable energy, and carbon dioxide emissions: a pathway to achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) in sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Energy Sector Management*. Emerald Publishing Limited, 1750-6220DOI 10.1108/IJESM-11-2022-0032
- [3] Adeyeye, S.A.O.; Adebayo-Oyetero, A.O.; Tiamiyu, H.K. (2017). Poverty and malnutrition in Africa: A Conceptual Analysis. *Nutr. Food Sci.* **2017**, 47, 754–764.
- [4] Aiyar, S. & Ebeke., C. (2020). “Inequality of Opportunity, Inequality of Income, and Economic Growth.” *World Development* 136(December):105115.
- [5] Oyetunbi, O. & Akinrinde, O.O. (2021). “Political Crisis and The Politics of Religious Divisiveness in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic”. *The Digest: Journal of Jurisprudence and Legisprudence* 2 (2), 173-96. <https://doi.org/10.15294/digest.v2i2.48586>.
- [6] Armah Bartholomew K. & Baek Seung Jin. (2015). Can the SDGs Promote Structural Transformation in Africa? An Empirical Analysis. *Development*, 58 (4), pp 473-491.
- [7] Asongu, S. A. and O. Kodila-Tedika. (2018). “Institutions and Poverty: A Critical Comment Based on Evolving Currents and Debates.” *Social Indicators Research* 139 (1):99–117
- [8] Asongu, S. A. & Eita, J. H (2023). The Conditional Influence of Poverty, Inequality, and Severity of Poverty on Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Applied Social Science*, 17 (3) 372–384.

- [9] Asongu, S. A. and R. T. Nting. (2022). “The Role of Finance in Inclusive Human Development in Africa Revisited.” *Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences*, 38 (2):345–70.
- [10] Assuad, C.S.A. (2020). Understanding rationality in sustainable development decision-making: Unfolding the motivations for action. *J. Knowl. Econ.*, 11, 1086–1119.
- [11] Buyana, K. (2020). Keeping the doors open: Experimenting science-policy-practice interfaces in africa for sustainable urban development. *J. Hous. Built Environ.*, 35, 539–554.
- [12] Cheng, Y.; Liu, H.; Wang, S.; Cui, X.; Li, Q. (2021). Global Action on SDGs: Policy Review and Outlook in a Post-Pandemic Era. *Sustainability*, 13, 6461. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13116461>
- [13] Davies, I. E. E., Nwankwo, C. O., Olofinnade, O. M. & Michaels, T. A. (2019). Insight review on impact of infrastructural development in driving the SDGs in developing nations: a case study of Nigeria. *IOP Conf. Ser.: Mater. Sci. Eng.* 640 012112.
- [14] Depren, K., Kartal, M.T., Celikdemir, N.C., Depren, O. (2022). Energy Consumption and and Environmental Degradation Nexus: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Fossil Fuel and Renewable Energy Consumption. *Ecological Informatics*. 70
- [15] Dewey, A. & Drahota, A. (2016). Introduction to systematic reviews: online learning module Cochrane Training, s.l.: s.n.
- [16] Fosu, A. K. (2015). “Growth, Inequality and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: Recent Progress in a Global Context.” *Oxford Development Studies* 43(1):44–59.
- [17] Koff, H. (2021). Why serve soup with a fork? How policy coherence for development can link environmental impact assessment with the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. *Environ. Impact Assess. Rev.*, 86, 10.
- [18] Mahajan, M. (2019). “The IHME in the Shifting Landscape of Global Health Metrics. in Special Issue: Knowledge and Politics in Setting and Measuring SDGs.” *Global Policy* 10 (S1): 110–120.
- [19] McNeill, D. (2019). “The Contested Discourse of Sustainable Agriculture.” *Global Policy* 10 (S1): 16–23.
- [20] Merry, S. E. (2019). “The Sustainable Development Goals Confront the Infrastructure of Measurement.” *Global Policy* 10 (Supp.1): 146–148.
- [21] Mohamed H. Farah, Alvedi Sabani. (2019). Towards Sustainable Development Goals: A Literature Review and a Conceptual Framework of Governance Issues in Africa. In Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV2019), Melbourne, VIC, Australia, April 3-5, 2019, 10 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3326365.3326392>
- [22] Mukarram, M. (2020). Impact of covid-19 on the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs). *Strateg. Anal.*, 44, 253–258.

- [23] Muza, O. & Debnath, R. (2021). Disruptive innovation for inclusive renewable policy in sub-Saharan Africa: A social shaping of technology analysis of appliance uptake in Rwanda. *Renewable Energy* 168 (2021) 896e912
- [24] Parris, D. & Peachey, J. (2013). A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113(3), pp. 377-393.
- [25] Pittway, L. (2008). Systematic literature reviews. In: *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative management research*. s.l.: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- [26] Giovanni Valensisi & Stephen Karingi (2017). From global goals to regional strategies: towards an African approach to SDGs, *African Geographical Review*, 36:1, 45-60, DOI: 10.1080/19376812.2016.1185738.
- [27] Pamela Chiamaka Uzoma, Kester Onor (2020). A Critical Appraisal of the Peer Review Performance of the SDGs in Nigeria and Ghana (2015-2019). *Covenant University Journal of Politics & International Affairs*. 8 (1).
- [28] Premiums Times (2022). Buhari pardons ex-Governors Dariye, Nyame serving jail terms for corruption; 157 others. Accessed 8/24/2023
- [29] <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/523946-buhari-pardons-ex-governors-dariye-nyame-serving-jail-terms-for-corruption-157-others.html?tztc=1>
- [30] Rotimi Jaiyesimi (2016). The Challenge of Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: The Way Forward. *African Journal of Reproductive Health September*, (Special Edition on SDGs) 20 (3), pp 15.
- [31] Rosati, F.; Faria, L.G. (2019). Addressing the SDGs in sustainability reports: The relationship with institutional factors. *J. Clean. Prod.* 215, 1312–1326.
- [32] Ruwanpura, K. N., & Hughes, A. (2016). Empowered spaces? Management articulations of gendered spaces in apparel factories in Karachi. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 23(9), 1270–1285.
- [33] Salahuddin, M., Ali, I., Sc, M., Vink, N. and Gow, J. (2019a). “The effects of urbanization and globalization on CO2 emissions: evidence from the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries”, *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, (Navarro 1998), Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 2699-2709.
- [34] Salahuddin, M., Gow, J., Ali, M.I., Hossain, M.R., Al-Azami, K.S., Akbar, D. and Gedikli, A. (2019b). “Urbanization-globalization-CO2 emissions nexus revisited: empirical evidence from South Africa”, *Heliyon*, Vol. 5 No. 6, p. e01974.
- [35] Santo, I. & Pekkola, (2023). Policy entrepreneurs in the global education complex: The case of Finnish education experts working in international organisations. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 98 (102749).
- [36] Rai, S. M., Brown, B. D., Ruwanpura, K. N. (2019). Decent work and economic growth – A gendered analysis. *World Development*, 113, 368–380
- [37] Silva, R., Oliveira, J., (2021). Global education policy in African fragile and conflict affected states: examining the Global Partnership for Education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2021.1947201>.

Issue 4/2023

- [38] Sultana, F. (2019). Decolonizing development education and the pursuit of social justice. *Hum. Geogr.* 12 (3), 31–46.
- [39] Weed, M. (2005). Meta Interpretation: a method for the Interpretive synthesis of qualitative research paper presented at the forum qualitative Sozialforschung/forum. *Qualitative Social Research*, Volume 6, pp. 1-17.
- [40] Tranfield, D., Denyer, D. & Smart, P. (2003). Towards a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review. *British Journal of Management*, 14(3), pp. 207-222.
- [41] Tiep, L.T.; Huan, N.Q.; Hong, T. (2021). Role of corporate social responsibility in sustainable energy development in emerging economy. *Int. J. Energy Econ. Policy*, 11, 172–186.
- [42] Trading Economics (2023). Nigeria Inflation Rate. Retrieved 8/25/2023 <https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/inflation-cpi>
- [43] Thorpe, R., Holt, R., Macpherson, A. & Pittaway, L. (2005). Using knowledge within small and medium-sized firms: a systematic review of the evidence. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(4), pp. 257-281.
- [44] Punch (2022). Buhari spends 225 days on medical trips, visits 40 countries. Accessed 8/24/2023 at <https://punchng.com/buhari-spends-225-days-on-medical-trips-visits-40-countries/>.