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Mitigating the African Economic Crisis Through Financial Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the challenges facing the African economy and financial inclusion. The paper undertakes a comprehensive exploration of the African economic landscape, navigating through historical intricacies, structural challenges, and global influences. Grounded in a quantitative methodology, the study adopted the survey method to systematically unravel the multifaceted dimensions of the economic crisis and financial inclusion in Africa. The study was anchored on both Monetarist and Keynesian models. A sample size of 350 participants was studied, using a purposive sampling technique. The study discovered that cultural, technological, and regulatory limits all significantly contribute to the economic crisis, which is evidenced by the high rate of currency devaluation in Africa, high rates of inflation in the price of goods, and economic downturns. Thus, the paper recommends that fin-tech companies, appropriate technology applications, and advancements in online payments could potentially save this predicament. The paper further recommends that the government should enact regulatory changes that lower entrance barriers for financial institutions, support innovation, and safeguard consumers to advance financial inclusion.

Keywords: African Economic Crisis; Economic Barriers; Financial Inclusion; Financial Services; Unraveling Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that several economic barriers prevent African nations from developing consistently (Adejuwon et al., 2010). High on the list are economic downturns, inflation, and currency devaluation in African countries, which shows that a substantial portion of the population lives within the poverty line (Adejuwon et al., 2010). Adejuwon et al. (2010) further argued that even among young people, unemployment is still a significant problem that exacerbates social discontent and economic instability. This implies that the rich and the poor still make a visible disparity in income. Also, Ake (2000) agrees that inadequate infrastructure and transportation systems that ought to promote and enhance African growth further impede economic activity in some African countries. Additionally, Odeleye and Olusoji (2016) highlighted factors that could impede the growth of financial services in Africa as level of financial literacy, cultural considerations, legal restrictions, uncertainty in politics, and corruption pose a serious obstacle to effective financial inclusion. However, the challenges faced by African economies are made worse by external factors like changes in the global economy, climate change, and external debts (Auwal et al., 2020).

Prior studies revealed that advancing sustainable development in Africa necessitates understanding and navigating the various economic challenges the region faces (Edeh & Nwaji, 2017; Adejuwon et al., 2010). A clear and comprehensive understanding of the matters at hand empowers policymakers to devise targeted and efficacious initiatives in managing the African economic challenges. This means addressing issues like poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality and creating solutions that are particular to each African nation. However, Arinze et al. (1990) suggest that effective resource allocation is made possible by skillfully navigating economic roadblocks. Thereby, putting infrastructure, healthcare, and education as priorities to enable countries to maximize their investments and promote sustainable development (Edeh & Dialoke, 2020). When investors perceive that the government is actively tackling challenges and promoting economic stability and growth, both foreign and local investors are more likely to engage in economic activities (Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2019). In the words of Arinze et al. (1990), sustaining social stability requires tackling economic obstacles. Poverty and unemployment rates that are too high can cause societal unrest. By overcoming these obstacles, we can foster inclusive growth and lessen the chance of social and political unrest (Enemuo, 2024).

African countries have several economic difficulties, through comprehension of these obstacles, nations can proactively participate in global partnerships and assist in tackling shared economic issues (Abiodun, 2015). Managing financial difficulties offers a chance to incorporate sustainable practices. This entails making investments in healthcare, education, and skill development so that people can actively support economic progress (Auwal et al., 2020; Edeh et al., 2019). In furtherance, Shree et al. (2024) argued that the maintenance of long-term ecological vitality is ensured when economic development and environmental protection are balanced. In the words of Adofu and Abula (2010), the economy becomes more resilient when people learn how to overcome obstacles and African countries with higher levels of resilience are better able to endure external shocks, adjust to changing conditions, and maintain long-term growth.

Onyekwulu et al. (2018) posit that to establish a favorable climate for sustainable development to flourish and enable African countries to end the cycle of poverty and create robust, inclusive economies, it is necessary to comprehend and navigate the key economic problems that face the continent. The economic story of the continent is a tapestry made of many threads that represent the successes and failures of its countries.

We must untangle the complexities of this intricate tapestry and recognize the subtleties that characterize Africa's economic journey to comprehend the present and foresee the future (Adofu & Abula, 2010). Since financial exclusion and poverty are often associated, the ability of individuals to access simple, inexpensive, and secure financial services is a necessary condition for promoting equitable economic growth (Abiodun, 2015). When there is a severe lack of official financing and extreme poverty, people have no choice but to use informal finance managers, who are typically outrageous, disorganized, and full of uncertainties (Odeleye & Olusoji, 2016). Millions of people lack access to formal financial services globally, which could result in the loss of deposits or savings, investible funds, and ultimately the ability of the global economy to produce the necessary wealth (Kee et al., 2022).

Abiodun (2015) concludes that financial products and services are widely acknowledged as capable of promoting financial inclusion and enhancing capital development in Africa, thereby raising the level of investment and economic activity in the continent. This is because financial inclusion has broad economic and social advantages and granting access to financial services is consequently progressively becoming a concern for all policymakers and government officials (Abdullahi et al., 2013).

The objective of this research is to examine the impact of the African economic crisis on financial inclusion in the region and to explore strategies for navigating these challenges. Specifically, the study aims to assess the current state of financial inclusion in Africa, analyze the impact of the economic crisis on financial inclusion, identify the key challenges and barriers to financial inclusion in Africa, and explore best practices and innovative approaches to financial inclusion in Africa.

This research holds significant value for various stakeholders. Firstly, it provides policymakers with a comprehensive understanding of the current state of financial inclusion in Africa, highlighting the areas that require urgent attention. Secondly, the analysis of the economic crisis's impact on financial inclusion offers insights into the resilience of financial systems and the vulnerabilities that need to be addressed. Thirdly, by identifying the key challenges and barriers to financial inclusion, the study aids in the formulation of targeted strategies to overcome these obstacles. Additionally, the exploration of best practices and innovative approaches serves as a guide for financial institutions and development organizations seeking to implement effective financial inclusion initiatives. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader goal of enhancing financial stability and economic development in Africa, benefiting individuals, businesses, and governments across the continent.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Context of African Economies

Africa's economic growth has its roots in a historical narrative that was molded by colonialism, post-independence conflicts, and continuous attempts to overcome enduring obstacles (Enemuo, 2024). In the words of Auwal et al. (2020), Africa was home to numerous civilizations that practiced craftsmanship, trade, and agriculture, creating a rich and varied economic environment. Trade routes served as the organizing principle for societies, and certain areas had highly developed systems of resource management and government. Motivated by the race for Africa, European nations colonized the region and frequently took advantage of its resources for personal financial benefit (Ake, 2000). To further colonial goals, Ake argued that economic systems were redesigned with an emphasis on extracting raw materials for export. He further asserts that little amount of industrialization was made, and economies grew mostly reliant on agriculture. Adofu and

Abula (2010) argued that the mid-20th century saw the independence of many African countries, raising hopes for economic self-determination. Initial optimism was tempered by challenges, as newly independent states inherited fragmented economies, often lacking diversified industries.

Many African countries, seeking to lessen their dependency on imported goods, embraced import substitution industrialization tactics (Adofu & Abula, 2010). Nevertheless, inefficiencies, corruption, and unsustainable economic practices were frequently the results of these attempts (Auwal et al., 2020). International financial institutions implemented Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in reaction to economic crises, promoting market-oriented reforms. Arinze et al. (1990) argued that although the goal of SAPs was to address fiscal imbalances, they frequently worsened poverty, damaged public services, and caused social discontent. Political stability brought forth by the overthrow of apartheid in South Africa and the installation of democratic governments in other countries aided in the expansion of the global economy (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Impact of Colonization and Post-Independence Challenges
Colonization, according to Ake (2000), had a major and lasting impact on Africa's economic development and growth. He further argued that the European countries changed African economic systems to serve their colonial objectives by utilizing and exploring the riches of the continent. These Colonialists sometimes constructed infrastructure only for resource extraction, leaving many places with inadequate and unbalanced infrastructure that hindered economic development in the wake of their departure (Arinze et al., 1990). In the words of Clarke et al. (2015), African economies shifted their primary source of income from the export of raw materials to the global market, leaving them open to fluctuations in the latter and with little prospects for value addition on the African continent. This, however, contributed significantly to the underdevelopment in the region (Shree et al., 2024; Auwal et al., 2020). After gaining independence, African nations faced numerous challenges in their quest for economic growth: Many of the countries that are still feeling the effects of colonialism have economies that are fragmented, few different firms, and difficulties assimilating into the global economy. Ake (2000) argued that political instability resulting from power struggles and internal turmoil hindered economic planning and development after independence. Arinze et al. (1990) believe that some nations experienced economic hardship and became dependent on international financial institutions because of their early post-independence accumulation of debt.

African nations' capacity to make investments in medical care, infrastructure, and education is severely hampered by external debt (Abdullahi et al., 2013). He argued that questions concerning the effects on the environment and sustainable development are raised by the fact that, even while foreign direct investment has increased in some places, it has occasionally been driven by extractive industries. Onyekwulu et al. (2018) stressed that Africa is susceptible to fluctuations in global economic conditions, which may have an impact on export revenue and commodity prices, ultimately influencing financial stability. However, understanding these historical and global variables is necessary to develop solutions to the persistent issues that African economies face. Initiatives focused on fair global collaboration, financial inclusiveness, and equitable prosperity are essential to enhancing resilience and realizing the continent's great potential (Adofu & Abula, 2010).

Current Economic Challenges

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There are numerous economic obstacles that African countries must overcome which influence their development and impede attempts to achieve long-term prosperity (Auwal et al., 2020). A sizable fraction of Africans is impoverished, especially those living in rural communities, and they face difficulties getting access to, financial services, education, and necessities (Auwal et al., 2020). High unemployment rates are dangerous for social stability and economic productivity, especially for young people who are not politically exposed; and come from a poor background. Ake (2000) believes that inadequate infrastructure impedes economic activity and reduces connectivity both inside and between countries. This includes unstable energy sources and transportation networks (Shree et al., 2024). Legal restrictions are still a major problem that hinders both local and foreign investment and reduces the effectiveness of financial services to the underbanked. Currency devaluation, inflation, technology imbalance, and Political unrest, such as coups and battles have also been the significant constraints to African economic growth and development.

According to Enemuo (2024), many African nations have high levels of external debt, which makes it difficult to service their debt and leaves little money available for financial technology, healthcare, and education expenditures. Some of these countries rely so much on borrowing to be able to pay their workers' salaries (Ake, 2000). While many still rely mostly on agriculture, and industrialization as a vital industry for many African countries. However, this agriculture is seriously threatened by climate change (Adofu & Abula, 2010). Floods, droughts, and other climate-related disasters occur more frequently, which affects both economic stability and food security in Africa. A shortage of qualified labor is a result of difficulties in delivering high-quality healthcare and education, which restricts the growth of human capital and lowers economic productivity (Edeh et al., 2021b). African nations frequently deal with unfair trade conditions, which makes it challenging for them to optimize the advantages of their goods on the international market (Enemuo, 2024). Arinze et al. (1990) stated that any economy that depends so much on the import of goods and other commodities is more vulnerable to changes in the price and volatility of the world market. While a sign of vitality, rapid population expansion can put a strain on resources and services, making it difficult to offer social services and employment opportunities that meet their demand. In the words of Ake (2000), a multifaceted approach is needed to address these issues, including investments in financial technology, human capital, good governance, diversification of economies, and initiatives to promote financial inclusiveness and sustainable growth. He further argued that, for Africa to realize its immense potential and overcome these obstacles, creative policies, international cooperation, and regional integration are essential.

The Role of Governance in Economic Development

According to Adofu and Abula (2010), a nation's governance frameworks have a significant impact on its economic results. While ineffective governance can result in corruption, inefficiency, and development barriers, effective governance can promote an atmosphere that is favorable to economic growth (Enemuo, 2024). Economic activities are supported by robust legal frameworks and the protection of property rights, investment, and entrepreneurship are encouraged by well-defined property rights. Arinze et al. (1990), argued that corruption can impede fair competition, divert resources, and change governmental policy, all of which can be detrimental to economic development. Effective resource allocation and investor trust are fostered by transparent and accountable governance (Edeh et al., 2021a). Long-term economic planning and development are more advantageous for nations with stable political settings (Abdullahi et al., 2013).

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Abdullahi et al. (2013) further stated that uncertainty brought on by political unrest might impede investment and economic expansion. In the words of Enemuo (2024), sustainable development and economic stability are facilitated by robust and efficient institutions, such as public administration and regulatory agencies. Effective public financial management, prudent budgeting, and sound fiscal policies all support macroeconomic stability, investor confidence, and general economic well-being. Infrastructure project prioritization and implementation are influenced by governance. Effective infrastructure development can ease corporate operations and increase economic productivity. Governance systems frequently have an impact on inclusive social policies like healthcare and education. A competent and effective workforce is a result of investments in human capital (Abdullahi et al., 2013). He argued that with an emphasis on technology, business-friendly legislation, and infrastructure development, the nation has achieved outstanding rates of economic growth. Onyekwulu et al. (2018) believe that strong governance frameworks, such as an efficient legal system, minimal levels of corruption, and investment in digital financial technology are key to enhancing financial inclusion in Africa.

Sustainable Development and Environmental Considerations

In Africa, the confluence of environmental sustainability and economic development is a crucial and intricate challenge (Adofu & Abula, 2010). The mining and processing of natural resources, such as lumber and minerals, is a major driver of economic growth in many African economies. Preventing degradation of the environment, deforestation, and biodiversity loss requires striking a balance between resource exploitation and conservation initiatives. A lot of African economies rely heavily on agriculture, yet unsustainable methods can cause deforestation, deterioration of the soil, and loss of arable land. For economic and environmental harmony, it is imperative to implement sustainable agriculture techniques, support agroforestry, and place a strong emphasis on land-use planning (Doguwa & Alade, 2015). Energy demand is growing, and reliance on fossil fuels is common, which increases greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of climate change. To promote energy security, reduce emissions, and achieve sustainable development, it is imperative to shift to renewable energy sources like solar and wind (Clarke et al., 2015). Ecosystems can be endangered, and economic activity hampered by insufficient water management. According to Gidigbi (2017), sustainable development requires the application of effective water management techniques, investment in water infrastructure, and the encouragement of conservation. He further stated that; pollution, a rise in resource demand, and habitat loss can result from rapid infrastructure development and urbanization. Environmental effects can be reduced by implementing eco-friendly urban design, making investments in green infrastructure, and encouraging sustainable building techniques (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Pollution and environmental deterioration are caused by improper trash disposal and poor waste management. In the words of Clarke et al. (2015), sustainable development requires the creation of extensive waste management programs, the encouragement of recycling, and the dissemination of information about responsible consumption.

Doguwa and Alade (2015) argued that the natural environments and abundant biodiversity of Africa provide prospects for eco-friendly travel. To maintain ecosystems, save species, and guarantee the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector, it is imperative to strike a balance between the development of tourism and conservation initiatives. The effects of climate change, such as harsh weather, droughts, and rising temperatures, are particularly dangerous for Africa (Auwal et al., 2020). To ensure sustainable growth in the face of climate change, economic planning must incorporate resilience and climate change adaptation measures. Ake (2000) claims that incorporating indigenous knowledge and involving local populations can improve sustainable development strategies. On the other hand, Adofu and Abula (2010) believe that a balanced approach must respect traditional ecological knowledge, involve people in decision-making, and guarantee equitable benefit-sharing. In doing so, Africa can be helped to implement sustainable development goals through partnerships and cooperative efforts with international organizations. According to Enemuo (2024), an all-encompassing strategy that considers the opportunities and difficulties that each African country presents is needed to successfully navigate the junction of environmental sustainability and economic development. This entails incorporating environmental factors into economic policies, implementing green technologies, encouraging sustainable activities, and spreading awareness of the connection between physical health and financial stability.

Theoretical Underpinning and Empirical Review

The researcher found both Monetarist and Keynesian models useful for this study. According to Lowe (1984), monetary and Keynesian financial theories both focus on strategies for addressing economic instability even though they take distinct approaches in solving economic issues. Monetary theory states that controlling the money supply is the responsibility of the government to avoid inflation. Keynesian economics promotes significant government intervention in the economy through fiscal measures like taxing and spending, especially during times of crisis. While Keynesian economists view government spending as a growth accelerator, monetarists are concerned that fiscal measures like spending could raise inflation and create market volatility. Keynesians hold that changes in any component of spending, investment, or government expenditures, cause production to alter because prices are relatively rigid. For instance, output will rise if government expenditure rises while all other spending factors stay the same. Classical economics, according to Keynes, maintained that fluctuations in economic output and employment provide possibilities for profit that people are motivated to seize, which in turn corrects economic imbalances. On the other hand, Keynes contended that some features of market economies and company pessimism would intensify economic weakness during recessions and lead to a further decline in aggregate demand. According to Keynesian economics, governments should increase consumer spending to stabilize aggregate demand and engage in deficit spending to offset a fall in investment during difficult economic times.

Keynesian economics' basic tenet is that the economy can be stabilized by government action (Lowe, 1984). The study of economic behavior and individual incentives was originally distinguished from the study of general aggregate variables and constructs by Keynes' theory. Keynes promoted higher government spending and reduced taxation to boost demand and lift the world economy out of the Great Depression.

Bigirimana and Hongyi (2018) use annual data from 2004 to 2016 to investigate the connection between Rwanda's economic growth and financial inclusion. When it is uncertain whether the underlying regressors are trend- or first-difference stationary, as defined by Pesaran, they used ARDL as a novel solution to the problem of testing the existence of a level relationship between a dependent variable and a set of repressors. The findings showed a long-term correlation between Rwanda's economic expansion and financial inclusion. The study suggests that to have the necessary impact, Rwanda should innovate its financial services more.

The study conducted by Nwafor et al. (2007) examined the connection between financial inclusion and Nigeria's economic expansion. Two-staged Least Squares Regression was used to test the two hypotheses that were developed, together with matching data that covered the years 2001 to 2016. The results showed that financial inclusion had a major impact on Nigeria's economic growth and that, throughout the reviewed period, financial industry intermediation had no effect on financial inclusion.

Hypothesis Development

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between financial awareness and financial inclusion in Africa.

H2: There is a significant negative relationship between economic crisis and financial inclusion in Africa.

H3: There is a significant negative relationship between obstacles (infrastructure, technology, cultural, legal) and financial inclusion in Africa.

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between innovative financial inclusion approaches and financial inclusion in Africa.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method adopted in this study is survey research design which focuses on a representative sample derived from the entire population of the study. A survey works on the premise that a given population is too large for any researcher to realistically observe all the elements in the population. The research in conducting this study used both primary and secondary sources as a source of information. These are data generated from questionnaires and/or interviews, information gathered from these sources enabled the researcher to carry out a critical analysis of the subject matter under study. Based on the complexity in studying the entire African population, a total of 200 participants were studied. This sample size was determined using the purposive sampling technique.

The measuring instrument for this study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is structured into two sections, A and B. Section A contains information on the respondent's demographic variables while section B has questions that bother on the solutions to the research objectives. Research of this nature can only be useful if the data collected are analyzed, interpreted, and presented for readers' consumption. To this end, a simple percentage was found useful here. The analysis was also done using percentage computation through tables that used qualitative and quantitative analysis.

RESULTS

The data presentations, analysis, and results interpretation are based on the description of data relevance to each research objective.

Table 1. Respondents' Region Distribution

Region	Respondents	Percentage
Central or Middle Africa	45	13%
East Africa	22	6%
Northern Africa	55	16%
Southern Africa	90	26%
West African	138	39%
Total	350	100

Source: Research Survey (2024)

The report in Table 1 shows that all the 5 regions that make up Africa were represented in the study. However, there was a low and high turn up from East and West Africa respectively. This shows that the issue of discourse which has to do with unraveling challenges of African Economic Crisis and Financial Inclusion got the desired outreach it requires.

Table 2. Respondents' Academic Exposure

Qualification	Respondents	Percentage
Post-Graduate Degree	158	45%
Bachelor's Degree	97	28%
Diploma	95	27%
Total	350	100

Source: Research Survey (2024)

Data generated from Table 2 reveals that participants were mainly those with post-graduate degrees. This validates the authenticity of the research findings, as information gathered came from people with specialized knowledge and skills in a particular field and a significant amount of independent research or practical experience. From the report, it indicates that respondents with doctoral, master's, and professional degrees were higher than those with bachelor's degrees and diplomas.

Table 3. Respondents' Perception of the Current State of Financial Inclusion in Africa

Variables	Feedback	Respondents	Percentage
Access to financial services	Low	105	30%
Usage of financial products	Average	110	31%
Overall level of financial literacy	Low	135	39%
Total		350	100

Source: Research Survey (2024)

According to responses to the study in Table 3, there is currently a low degree of financial inclusion in each of the 54 African nations. This includes low levels of financial knowledge across various population groups and limited access to financial services. Reports also indicate that the use of financial products has improved.

Table 4. Respondents' Perception of the Impact of the Economic Crisis on Financial Inclusion

Feedback	Response	Percentage Impact
Economic downturns	Very High	100%
Inflation	Very High	100%
Currency devaluation	Very High	100%

Source: Research Survey (2024)

Based on the data generated from Table 4, it appears that the economic crisis has had the following effects on financial inclusion in Africa: very high rates of currency devaluation, very high rates of inflation in the price of goods and services, and very high economic downturns. These effects are particularly evident in some parts of West Africa, specifically in Nigeria.

Table 5. Respondents' Perception of Key Challenges and Barriers to Financial Inclusion in Africa

Feedback	Response	Percentage Impact
Yes	223	64%
No	40	11%
Uncertain	87	25%
Total	350	100

Source: Research Survey (2024)

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Table 5 indicates that a higher proportion of research participants concur that obstacles and hurdles impede Africans' ability to obtain financial products and services. The respondents identified a number of these major obstacles, including infrastructure or technological limitations, cultural considerations that could impede the growth of financial services, and legal restrictions.

Table 6. Respondents' Support on the Best Practices and Innovative Approaches to Financial Inclusion in Africa

Feedback	Response	Percentage Support
Mobile Money	Supported	100%
Agent Banking	Supported	100%
Digital Financial Services	Supported	100%
Financial Literacy and Education	Supported	100%
Regulatory Reforms	Supported	100%

Source: Research Survey (2024)

As can be observed from Table 6, all the respondents agreed that some of the most important and innovative ways to promote financial inclusion in Africa are mobile money, agent banking, digital financial services, and regulatory reforms. Speaking over the phone with a few research subjects. They contended that offering banking services through mobile technology has revolutionized the continent of Africa. The establishment of banking agent networks in underprivileged and rural areas has aided in the expansion of financial services to previously unreached people. On behalf of banks, agents can do routine banking operations, giving clients access to services near to where they live.

Result of Hypotheses Testing

The results of the Chi-Square independence test showed that financial inclusion in Africa is currently low ($P>0.05$). This suggests that increasing financial awareness across various African demographic segments and facilitating access to financial services are necessary. The economic crisis has had a significant influence on financial inclusion, according to a Pearson Correlation test ($P>0.05$). This suggests, however, that the African government should step up measures to mitigate the impact of severe economic downturns, high rates of currency devaluation, and high rates of inflation in the cost of goods and services on the availability and use of financial services. Financial inclusion in Africa has many obstacles, according to the Chi-Square test of independence ($P>0.05$). Obstacles including infrastructure or technological limitations, cultural considerations, and legal restrictions ought to be minimized. The Chi-square test of independence revealed that there are little or no innovative approaches to financial inclusion in Africa ($P>0.05$). This suggests that regulators and African governments should concentrate on enhancing the continent's digital financial services and regulatory reforms.

DISCUSSION

The study investigates the historical roots of the current economic crisis in Africa by looking at post-independence wars, the historical trajectory of economic development in African countries, and the long-lasting repercussions of colonization. It highlights fundamental problems that are contributing to the economic disaster, such as trade imbalances, a reliance on extractive industries, and inadequate technology. The essay discusses these aspects' effects on sustainable economic growth. Mironga (2022) asserts that inadequate governance and corruption are the main reasons behind the economic challenges faced by African nations. One important topic, according to Nazir et al. (2020), is how global economic trends affect African economies.

This article examines the impact of trade ties, foreign debt burdens, and global economic interdependence on the economic conditions in Africa. The study examines the measures taken by governments to reduce the unavailability of financial services, emphasizing the aims of sustainable development, microfinance programs, and financial product knowledge. Results indicate that financial services and products are insufficient in Africa. The study discovered that cultural, technological, and regulatory limits all significantly contribute to the economic crisis, which is evidenced by the high rate of currency devaluation in Africa, high rates of inflation in the price of goods, and economic downturns. Additional research indicates that fin-tech companies, appropriate technology applications, and advancements in online payments could potentially save this predicament. "Beyond mobile money, digital financial services such as digital wallets, online banking, and digital lending platforms are expanding access to financial services in Africa," the respondents claimed over the phone. They also show that boosting the financial literacy of marginalized communities is essential to getting them more involved in the formal financial system.

CONCLUSION

This study ends as a thorough analysis of the many dimensions of Africa's economic environment. The paper meticulously untangles the historical threads entangled with the continent's development, shedding light on the long-lasting consequences of colonization, the difficulties encountered following independence, and the intricate relationships between global economic processes. The structural issues that contribute to the economic challenges that African nations face, such as unbalanced regulatory reforms, trade imbalances, weak governance, and a reliance on extractive industries, are analyzed through a critical perspective in this article. It provides relevant information on the difficulties of navigating a dynamic international economic environment by examining the intricate interactions between home and foreign economic issues.

Additionally, the report provides a comparative analysis, recognizing the uniqueness of African countries and highlighting the significance of customized solutions. It tells tales of triumphs and tenacious efforts, offering a fair-minded viewpoint that transcends simple difficulties and recognizes the possibility of expansion, creativity, and sustainable development. In the future described in the paper, Africa will overcome its economic difficulties by uniting behind its rich cultural diversity, long history, and resolve to pave the way for prosperity. "Unravelling Challenges" is a source of hope as well as a thorough examination of the economic complexity of Africa. It demands teamwork, thoughtful consideration before making decisions, and an unwavering dedication to creating a resilient and inclusive economic environment. The reader is left feeling hopeful as the last pages are turned, motivated by the opportunities that arise when obstacles are overcome with knowledge, tenacity, and a shared desire to navigate toward economic development in the African environment.

Policymakers, corporations, and individuals can help Africa overcome its economic difficulties and build a resilient, inclusive, and equitable financial future by putting these suggestions into practice jointly (Enemuo, 2024). Based on the survey findings, several recommendations were made to enhance financial inclusion in Africa. Firstly, establishing networks of banking representatives can provide financial services to previously unreached populations in rural and underdeveloped areas, with agents performing routine banking operations on behalf of banks to offer clients convenient access to services. Secondly, prioritizing open and accountable governance systems can inspire investor confidence and promote long-term economic growth. Thirdly, leveraging mobile technologies to deliver financial services across Africa should be a focus, as digital wallets, internet banking, and digital lending platforms are often more convenient and affordable than traditional banking. Fourthly, collaboration between governments, financial institutions, telecom providers, and other stakeholders is crucial for promoting financial inclusion. Public-private partnerships can help build financial infrastructure and overcome regulatory challenges. Fifthly, increasing financial literacy among marginalized groups is essential for their participation in the formal financial system; educational initiatives that teach budgeting, savings, and the benefits of financial services can reduce inclusion barriers. Sixthly, governments can advance financial inclusion by enacting regulatory changes that lower entry barriers for financial institutions, support innovation, and protect consumers, with adaptable policies that accommodate new business models and technological advancements. Lastly, community-based financial organizations, such as credit unions and savings groups, play a crucial role in offering financial services to underserved and rural populations, providing services that traditional banks may not and often being more attuned to the needs of their members.

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