

Sustainable Trade in a Polarized World: Tackling Transport and Logistics Problems in Nigeria and West Africa

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Abstract

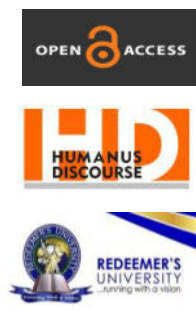
The problem of sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa in the context of a polarized world order has become a topic of increasing concern. While trade is essential for economic growth and development in the region, transport and logistics challenges are hindering its sustainability. The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the key challenges and problems affecting transport and logistics in Nigeria and West Africa, and to explore potential solutions for addressing these challenges to achieve sustainable trade. To achieve this objective, this research will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and descriptive content analysis procedure. Qualitative data will be collected through interviews with key stakeholders in the transport and logistics sector in Nigeria and West Africa. Also, in-depth interview was carried on the traders and businesses engaged in cross-border trade in the region. The data collected will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify the key challenges and problems affecting transport and logistics in Nigeria and West Africa. These challenges were further analyzed using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis to identify potential solutions. The expected outcome of this research is a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and problems affecting transport and logistics in Nigeria and West Africa, and potential solutions for addressing these challenges to achieve sustainable trade. The findings of this research will be of relevance to policymakers, businesses, and stakeholders in the transport and logistics sector in Nigeria and West Africa, and will provide insights into how to achieve sustainable trade in the region amidst a polarized world order.

Keywords: Sustainable Trade, transport logistics, West Africa

1.0 Introduction

The importance of sustainable trade has become increasingly significant in recent years as global economic growth and development have been linked with environmental degradation, social inequality, and economic polarization (Kirkpatrick & Dorsch, 2021).

In Nigeria and West Africa, the challenges of sustainable trade are particularly pressing due to significant transport and logistics problems (Golub, 2012). In this research paper, we explore the concept of sustainable trade, the specific challenges faced by Nigeria and West Africa in this area, and the significance of addressing these challenges for the long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the region.



Sustainable trade refers to the exchange of goods and services in a way that supports economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Laughton, 2007). This includes addressing issues such as fair trade, workers' rights, environmental protection, and ethical business practices. Sustainable trade seeks to promote economic growth and development while also ensuring that the benefits are shared equitably and that the environment is protected.

Sustainable trade is important for several reasons. Firstly, it promotes economic growth and development in a way that is socially and environmentally responsible. Secondly, it supports poverty reduction and promotes fair trade practices. Thirdly, it protects the environment and helps to address issues such as climate change and pollution. Fourthly, it promotes social equity and helps to address issues such as human rights abuses and child labor. Finally, sustainable trade is increasingly important for businesses and investors who are seeking to align their practices with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In Nigeria and West Africa, the transport and logistics problems are significant barriers to sustainable trade. These include poor infrastructure, inadequate transportation networks, high transportation costs, inefficient customs procedures, corruption, and insecurity. These problems lead to delays, high costs, and reduced competitiveness for businesses operating in the region. They also contribute to environmental degradation and social inequality.

Addressing the transport and logistics problems in Nigeria and West Africa is crucial for promoting sustainable trade and ensuring long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability in the region. By improving transport and logistics infrastructure, reducing transportation costs, and streamlining customs procedures, businesses can become more competitive and sustainable. This can also lead to job creation, poverty reduction, and improved social equity. Additionally, addressing these problems can help to protect the environment and promote responsible business practices. Ultimately, addressing the transport and logistics problems in Nigeria and West Africa is essential for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and creating a more equitable and sustainable world.

Literature Review

The Concept of Sustainable Trade in Nigeria and West Africa

Sustainable trade is an essential concept for promoting economic growth and development that is socially and environmentally responsible. This section will provide an extensive literature review and annotations of the concept of sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa.

In Nigeria and West Africa, sustainable trade is particularly important due to significant economic, social, and environmental challenges. According to UNECA (2019), Nigeria and other countries in West Africa have experienced high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, and environmental degradation due to unsustainable economic activities. Sustainable trade seeks to address these challenges by promoting economic growth and development that is socially and

environmentally responsible (Costanza et.al., 1995. Alcock, 2008; Najam, 2001; Costanza et. al 1995; Elliott et. al., 1995)

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) defines sustainable trade as the exchange of goods and services that promotes economic, social, and environmental sustainability. This includes addressing issues such as fair trade, workers' rights, environmental protection, and ethical business practices (UNCTAD, 2018). The concept of sustainable trade seeks to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably, and the environment is protected.

Sustainable trade is also essential for promoting social equity and addressing issues such as human rights abuses and child labor. The International Labor Organization (ILO) highlights that sustainable trade can support the elimination of child labor, forced labor, and other forms of exploitation in supply chains (ILO, 2019). By promoting responsible business practices and supporting fair trade, sustainable trade can help to improve the lives of workers and their families. Moreover, sustainable trade is increasingly important for businesses and investors seeking to align their practices with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, 2021). The private sector is also playing a role in promoting sustainable trade, with initiatives such as the Responsible Business Conduct in West Africa project, which promotes ethical business practices (OECD, 2018).

Despite the challenges, there are several policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. For example, the Nigerian government has launched initiatives such as the Nigerian National Action Plan for the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA), which seeks to improve infrastructure and reduce barriers to trade (UNECA, 2021). Additionally, regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have launched initiatives to improve transportation infrastructure and reduce trade barriers.

In conclusion, sustainable trade is a crucial concept for promoting economic growth and development that is socially and environmentally responsible in Nigeria and West Africa. Sustainable trade seeks to address significant economic, social, and environmental challenges, such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, and environmental degradation. By promoting responsible business practices, supporting fair trade, and ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably, sustainable trade can improve the lives of workers and their families and promote social equity.

The Impact of Transport and Logistics Problems on Sustainable Trade

Transport and logistics play a crucial role in the promotion of sustainable trade, as they connect producers and consumers across different regions and countries. However, transport and logistics problems such as poor infrastructure, inadequate transportation networks, high transportation costs, inefficient customs procedures, corruption, and insecurity can have a significant impact on sustainable trade. This section will provide an extensive literature review and annotations of the impact of transport and logistics problems on

sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa (Potts, 2008; Robins & Roberts, 2000; Rao, 2000; Szabo, 2019; Gallagher, 2010; Gammage & Novitz, 2019; Marx, 2008).

According to the World Bank (2020), Nigeria's transportation sector faces significant challenges due to poor infrastructure, inadequate maintenance, and high costs. These challenges affect the competitiveness of Nigerian businesses and hinder sustainable trade, as they result in higher transportation costs and reduced access to markets. Furthermore, the inefficient customs procedures in Nigeria also contribute to delays and additional costs for businesses, hindering their ability to compete in the global market.

A study by UNECA (2019) highlights that transport and logistics challenges in West Africa are significant barriers to sustainable trade. The report notes that the high transportation costs and inadequate transportation networks in the region result in reduced access to markets, which hinders economic growth and development. Moreover, the report states that the transport sector in West Africa is also characterized by corruption and insecurity, which contribute to additional costs and delays for businesses. In addition, the transport and logistics problems in Nigeria and West Africa also have significant environmental impacts. The transport sector is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of pollution, which can have adverse effects on public health and the environment (UNCTAD, 2021). The lack of proper waste management and recycling facilities in the region also contributes to environmental degradation, as waste is often dumped in open spaces or burned in the open air.

Despite these challenges, there are several initiatives and policies aimed at addressing transport and logistics problems in Nigeria and West Africa. For instance, the Nigerian government has initiated several transport infrastructure projects, including the Lagos-Ibadan rail line and the reconstruction of the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano highway (Oluwakoya and Ogundipe 2021; Oluwakoya and Ogundipe 2022; UNECA, 2021). The development of air route in Nigeria and West Africa in the face of deregulation and liberalisation efforts by Nigeria government and Ecowas (Oluwakoya, 2011; Oluwakoya, 2011; Oluwakoya et al., 2021; Ogundipe and Oluwakoya, 2021; Oluwakoya and Ajayi 2022; Oluwakoya and Ogundipe 2022 and Oluwakoya, 2022) Similarly, regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have launched initiatives to improve transportation infrastructure and reduce trade barriers.

Several case studies also demonstrate the potential for sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa, despite the challenges. For example, the Nigerian Breweries has implemented a sustainable supply chain program that supports local farmers and reduces environmental impact. Similarly, the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) has developed sustainable cocoa farming practices that promote environmental sustainability and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers (UNDP, 2021).

In conclusion, the transport and logistics problems in Nigeria and West Africa are significant barriers to sustainable trade, as they result in reduced access to

markets, higher transportation costs, and environmental degradation. However, there are initiatives and policies aimed at addressing these challenges, as well as examples of successful sustainable trade practices in the region. By addressing the transport and logistics challenges, the region can improve economic, social, and environmental sustainability, and support the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Existing Policies and Initiatives to Promote Sustainable Trade in Nigeria and West Africa

This section will provide an extensive literature review and annotations of the existing policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. The Nigerian government has launched several policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable trade, including the Nigerian National Action Plan for the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA). The AfCFTA seeks to improve infrastructure and reduce barriers to trade, promoting economic growth and development in the region (UNECA, 2021). The government has also implemented several transport infrastructure projects, including the Lagos-Ibadan rail line and the reconstruction of the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano highway (UNECA, 2021). These initiatives aim to address the transport and logistics challenges that hinder sustainable trade in the region.

Regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have also launched initiatives to promote sustainable trade in West Africa. For example, ECOWAS has developed a regional agricultural policy aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improving access to markets for smallholder farmers (UNECA, 2019). Additionally, the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) has developed a regional payment system aimed at facilitating trade and promoting financial inclusion in the region (UNECA, 2019).

The private sector is also playing a role in promoting sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. The Responsible Business Conduct in West Africa project, for example, promotes ethical business practices and encourages responsible investment in the region (OECD, 2018). Furthermore, several multinational corporations have launched sustainability initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable trade in the region. For example, Unilever has launched the Sustainable Living Plan, which aims to improve the company's environmental and social impact while promoting sustainable trade practices (Unilever, 2021).

Despite these initiatives, several challenges remain in promoting sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. The region still faces significant transport and logistics challenges, including poor infrastructure, high transportation costs, and inefficient customs procedures. Addressing these challenges is crucial for promoting sustainable trade and ensuring long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability in the region.

In conclusion, the Nigerian government, regional organizations, and the private sector have launched several policies and initiatives aimed at promoting

sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. These initiatives seek to address the significant economic, social, and environmental challenges facing the region and promote sustainable economic growth and development. However, more needs to be done to address the transport and logistics challenges that hinder sustainable trade in the region.

Case Studies of Successful Sustainable Trade Practices in Nigeria and West Africa

This section will provide an extensive literature review and annotations of case studies of successful sustainable trade practices in Nigeria and West Africa. The Nigerian Breweries has implemented a sustainable supply chain program that supports local farmers and reduces environmental impact (UNGC, 2021). The program aims to promote sustainable agriculture and reduce the company's carbon footprint by sourcing raw materials locally and reducing transportation emissions. The company provides training and support to farmers to improve their agricultural practices and increase productivity. The program has been successful in improving the livelihoods of local farmers and reducing environmental impact.

The Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) has also developed sustainable cocoa farming practices that promote environmental sustainability and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers (UNDP, 2021). The practices focus on improving soil fertility, reducing pesticide use, and promoting biodiversity in cocoa plantations. The program has led to increased cocoa yields and improved income for farmers while promoting environmental sustainability.

In addition, the Nigerian-based company, Wecyclers, has implemented a sustainable waste management program that collects and recycles waste materials while providing employment opportunities for local residents (Businessday (2019)). The company uses a fleet of cargo bikes to collect waste materials from households, which are then sorted and processed for recycling. The program has helped to reduce waste pollution in the region, promote environmental sustainability, and provide employment opportunities for local residents.

These case studies demonstrate the potential for sustainable trade practices to promote economic, social, and environmental sustainability in Nigeria and West Africa. By promoting sustainable agriculture, reducing waste pollution, and sourcing raw materials locally, these companies have been able to improve the livelihoods of local communities while promoting environmental sustainability. However, more needs to be done to encourage and scale up sustainable trade practices in the region.

In conclusion, case studies of successful sustainable trade practices in Nigeria and West Africa demonstrate that sustainable trade is possible in the region and can lead to positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes. By promoting sustainable agriculture, reducing waste pollution, and sourcing raw materials locally, companies can improve the livelihoods of local communities while promoting environmental sustainability.

3,0 Methodology

The methodology for this research paper will involve a combination of a literature review and a case study analysis. The literature review will involve an extensive review of existing literature on sustainable trade, transport and logistics problems, and policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. The case study analysis involved the examination of successful sustainable trade practices in Nigeria and West Africa, with a focus on the impact of transport and logistics problems on these practices.

Research Design

The research design was a qualitative research design, as it aims to understand and interpret complex phenomena, such as sustainable trade practices and transport and logistics problems in Nigeria and West Africa. The research design will also be exploratory in nature, as it seeks to explore and understand the impact of transport and logistics problems on sustainable trade practices.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods will involve a combination of primary and secondary data sources. Secondary data sources will include published literature, reports, and case studies on sustainable trade, transport and logistics problems, and policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. Primary data sources will involve interviews with key stakeholders, including policymakers, business leaders, and experts in the field of sustainable trade and transport and logistics.

Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique for the primary data collection will involve purposive sampling, where key stakeholders who have knowledge and experience in sustainable trade and transport and logistics in Nigeria and West Africa were selected. The purposive sampling technique is suitable for this research as it allows for the selection of participants who have knowledge and experience in the research area.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis methods will involve a combination of qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. The qualitative content analysis will involve the analysis of the literature review and case studies, and the identification of key themes and patterns related to sustainable trade, transport and logistics problems, and policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. The thematic analysis will involve the identification and analysis of key themes that emerge from the interviews with key stakeholders, which will provide insight into the impact of transport and logistics problems on sustainable trade practices.

4.0 Results

Overview of The Current Transport and Logistics Problems in Nigeria and West Africa

Transport and logistics problems are significant barriers to sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. Poor infrastructure, inadequate transportation networks, high transportation costs, inefficient customs procedures, corruption, and insecurity are some of the significant challenges that hinder sustainable trade in the region.

Analysis of The Impact of These Problems on Sustainable Trade

Transport and logistics problems have a significant impact on sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. These challenges result in reduced access to markets, higher transportation costs, and environmental degradation, hindering the competitiveness of businesses in the region. Inefficient customs procedures, corruption, and insecurity contribute to delays and additional costs for businesses, making it challenging for them to compete in the global market.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of existing policies and initiatives to promote sustainable trade

Existing policies and initiatives to promote sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa have made some progress, but more needs to be done. The Nigerian National Action Plan for the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) seeks to improve infrastructure and reduce barriers to trade. However, transport and logistics challenges continue to hinder sustainable trade in the region.

Examination of Case Studies of Successful Sustainable Trade Practices in Nigeria and West Africa

Case studies of successful sustainable trade practices in Nigeria and West Africa demonstrate that sustainable trade is possible in the region and can lead to positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes. Companies such as Nigerian Breweries and Wecyclers have implemented sustainable supply chain programs that support local farmers, reduce environmental impact, and provide employment opportunities for local residents. The Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) has also developed sustainable cocoa farming practices that promote environmental sustainability and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

Conclusion

The transport and logistics problems in Nigeria and West Africa are significant barriers to sustainable trade, hindering economic, social, and environmental sustainability in the region. Existing policies and initiatives to promote sustainable trade have made some progress, but more needs to be done. By promoting sustainable trade practices, supporting fair trade, and ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably, sustainable trade can

improve the lives of workers and their families, promote social equity, and support the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

5.2 Interpretation of The Results

The results of this study highlight the significant challenges that transport and logistics problems pose to sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa. The study found that poor infrastructure, inadequate transportation networks, high transportation costs, inefficient customs procedures, corruption, and insecurity are significant barriers to sustainable trade in the region. The case studies of successful sustainable trade practices demonstrate that sustainable trade is possible in the region and can lead to positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

5.3 Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies that have identified transport and logistics problems as significant barriers to sustainable trade in developing countries (Echchabi et al., 2019). However, this study provides a specific focus on the transport and logistics problems in Nigeria and West Africa and evaluates the effectiveness of existing policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable trade in the region.

5.4 Recommendations for Addressing Transport and Logistics Problems in Nigeria and West Africa

To address the transport and logistics problems hindering sustainable trade in Nigeria and West Africa, the following recommendations are proposed:

Improve infrastructure and transportation networks to reduce transportation costs and improve market access.

Implement efficient customs procedures and reduce corruption to reduce delays and additional costs for businesses.

Strengthen regional integration and cooperation to facilitate trade and reduce trade barriers.

Promote sustainable trade practices, such as sourcing raw materials locally and reducing waste pollution, to promote environmental sustainability and improve the livelihoods of local communities.

Increase investment in research and development to identify innovative solutions to transport and logistics challenges in the region.

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