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Dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations: A hindrance to sustainable development in Africa

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Abstract: Using a qualitative research methodology and exploratory approach to collect data, this study assessed the effects of dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations and its repercussions for achieving sustainable development. The collected data were analysed using document and content analysis techniques. The study revealed that dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has led to aid dependency, political violence, and poverty. It has promoted laziness and an inferiority complex that affects the working conditions of Africans. Further, it has promoted corruption and affected the rule of law for good governance; yet, sustainable development cannot occur without it. Moreover, dependency syndrome has inhibited innovation and led to the destruction of the local industries that are key to achieving sustainable development. The results of the study found that dependency syndrome has prevented the development of a robust transport network system that could promote African trade relations, which would lead to sustainable development. The results also posited that chronic poverty and underdevelopment in Africa are perpetuated by the dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations. The study recommended that Africa needs to overcome dependency syndrome and reform her international relations with external world. This would require establishing a continental sovereignty that enables the continent to have one common foreign policy within its planning diplomacy endeavours.

Keywords: Africa; international relations; economic development; economic growth; dependency syndrome; sustainable development

1. Introduction

This study aims to address a substantial research gap on the existing dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations and its repercussions for sustainable development in Africa. The aim of international relations among the world states is to prevent the occurrence of political violence and promote trade diplomacy, which promotes sustainable economic development and enhances the ability to achieve sustainable development. However, in Africa, that has not been the case, as Africa's international relations seem not to exist because the continent is ravaged by intractable conflicts and chronic poverty. There are close interrelationships between sustainable development and peace and security, as there can be no sustainable development without peace and vice versa. No sustainable development can exist without cooperation and equal trade relations among the world states. Although war is a continuation of political intercourse, its occurrence signals failure of international relations and promotes poverty and underdevelopment. Political violence or war leads to poverty and underdevelopment. However, the dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has weakened any possibility of achieving economic

development that leads to sustainable development. It has promoted unequal cooperation and trade relations between Africa and other continents. These unequal cooperation and trade relations have promoted win-lose situations, thus hampering any efforts to achieve sustainable economic development for sustainable development in Africa.

The political instability that engulfs the African continent that have prevented Africa's pathway to sustainable development results from a failure of Africa's international relations, and this failure is connected to the prevalence of the dependency syndrome. The prevalence of dependency syndrome in Africa has undermined individual states' responsibility and political power to develop initiatives and decision-making abilities that promote economic development. The significance of this study is the fact that dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations presents a formidable obstacle to economic development because it keeps overloading institutions and weakening capacity and ownership. It creates revenue instability and fragmented budgets, endorses corruption, lowers tax efforts, and undermines accountability, transparency, and the rule of law that governs democratic decision-making. African states have long depended on the foreign aid that emanates from developed countries, making them mentally handicapped and unable to be self-sufficient and reliant. The dependency syndrome has made African states less likely to achieve meaningful gross domestic product (GDP) growth, which would make them use natural minerals to benefit the continent, thus achieving sustainable development.

The practical solution the study proffers is that, for Africa's international relations to promote economic development that leads to the realisation of sustainable development, the continent needs to reform and establish a continental foreign policy. It is through a continental foreign policy established to advance the interests of the continent that dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations can be addressed, thus progress towards achieving sustainable development in Africa. A continental foreign policy would empower the continent to have one common vision of sustainable development, and would enhance the capacity of promoting local industries and Africa's natural resources to promote sustainable economic development that leads to sustainable development. The potential must generate a new mindset and strong planning diplomacy characterised by emancipation, empowerment, and continental sovereignty that brings Africans together with shared responsibility.

The study adopted a qualitative methodology with exploratory approach that relied on the data collected from secondary sources published in the public domain and desktop research. The study started by reviewing the literature on dependency syndrome and Africa's international relations, which results in the loss of self-independence and intensifies mental laziness, unemployment, and poverty. The purpose of exploratory research was to illuminate the existence of dependency syndrome in Africa's international relations and explain its repercussions for achieving sustainable development. Polit and Beck (2012) noted that exploratory research is designed to illuminate how a phenomenon is manifested; thus, it helps determine the full nature of a little-understood phenomenon. This study focused on dependency syndrome and its effects on sustainable development, neglected by most African scholars. Little is said on the effects of dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations on sustainable development and the continuation of

development that impedes independent thinking and self-independence. Reid-Searl and Happell (2012) noted further that a qualitative exploratory design allows the researcher to explore a topic with limited coverage within the literature. It also enables the study researchers to contribute to developing new knowledge in their study area (Reid-Searl and Happell, 2012).

When defining dependency syndrome and how it overwhelms Africa's international relations, the study showcased the theoretical and practical effects on economic growth for sustainable development. It used an eclectic approach, applied to different phenomena of dependency theory with different epistemological approaches. This was done to detect and demonstrate an understanding of the nuances and complexities of the dependency syndrome. The investigation of how the concept of dependency syndrome leads to mental laziness and loss of self-independence was understood from an economic development and growth perspective that promotes sustainable development. Understanding the dependency syndrome from a laziness dimension was found to be embedded in colonial legacies and has been a determining factor preventing sustainable development in Africa. Investigating how this dependency syndrome affects African states individually and examining how it is embedded in Africa's international relations helped the researchers understand that the current poverty in Africa is due to mental laziness.

Subsequently, the exploratory processes in this study involved characterising dependency syndrome as a source of mental laziness that hinders individual states from being self-reliant and self-independent, thus preventing the realisation of sustainable development. First, the study explained that dependence syndrome is a source of poverty because it deprives people of the ability and power to decide on their own or to drive daily business, leading to economic and sustainable development. Thus, dependency syndrome has benefited African people and prevented everyday economic activities that promote sustainable development. It demotivates people to work, as it is observed in the African Union (AU), which is the hub of Africa's international relations. For instance, the AU depends on external funders, mainly from colonialists and China as well as Russia. The use of external funders or well-wishers has made Africans unable to be creative or innovative. If one looks at Africa's resources and how the continent remained poor, it is evident that mental laziness is a major issue.

Dependency syndrome is an enemy of innovation. Sustainable development is based on sustainability that involves social, economic, environment and as well as sustainable innovation. Innovation leads to sustainable development because it becomes an enhancement process promoting innovative ideas, products, and quality services that benefit people and society (Adams et al., 2006). Innovation leads to new thoughts and creative ideas and brings unique perspectives on products and services that lead to sustainable development (Toivonen and Tuominen, 2009). Van Halen et al. (2005) argued that innovation leads to sustainable development in two ways: it promotes novelty that empowers people and enables people to develop themselves. This study aims to theoretically explain the repercussions of dependency syndrome embedded in Africa's international relations on sustainable development in Africa. The study revealed that dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations hinders the achievement of sustainable development. It argues that African member

states have the potential to achieve sustainable development. However, dependency syndrome has not been overcome and is a significant source of political instability, poverty, and underdevelopment. This argument was explained in four critical sections. While the introductory section explains the research techniques and methodology adopted in this study, the second section defines dependency syndrome, Africa's international relations, economic development, and sustainable development. The third section explains dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations and its effects on economic development for sustainable development. This means that the section explains facts that make dependency syndrome hinder the achievement of sustainable development in Africa. The fourth section consists of discussions of the findings, while the fifth section proffers concluding remarks and recommendations of the study.

2. Definitions of terms

McGlinchey (2017) states that international relations are concerned with numerous disparate events, as presented in daily newspapers, television, radio, and social media. Niyitunga (2021) states that these events include domestic, regional, and international meetings and negotiations concluded by leaders on a particular issue affecting international society. Further, they include news reports on political instability leading to deadly wars and conflicts, famine, poverty and underdevelopment, xenophobia, and acts of terror. In the Penguin Dictionary of International Relations, international relations are used to identify all interactions between 'states-based actors across state boundaries' (Graham and Newnham, 1998, p. 274). Mingst and Arreguin-Toft (2016) define international relations as the study of the interactions among the various actors participating in international politics, which include states; international organisations; and subnational entities such as bureaucracy and local governments; and individuals. In this current study, Africa's international relations are thus understood as the cross-boundary relationships between African states and their dealings with other external continents.

This study defines dependency syndrome as the 'situation in which a country cannot perform many of the core functions of government, such as operations and maintenance, or the delivery of basic public services, without foreign aid funding and expertise' (Qian, 2015, p. 279). Dependency syndrome has made African states and other poor regions incapable of achieving economic growth and development without foreign assistance (Qian, 2015). Thus, African states depend on foreign aid despite the harsh conditions associated with that aid. In Africa's current international relations with other continents, foreign aid has become a significant norm. It has led to chronic poverty, making it difficult for the continent to achieve sustainable development. The dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has made the continent marred by desperate events such as civil wars and intractable conflicts, the failure of political leadership, coup d'états, chronic poverty and deep-rooted corruption, social protests, and xenophobia.

Economic development comprises two concepts: economics and development. It refers to the structural transformation of an economy by introducing more mechanised and updated technologies to increase labour productivity and employment to achieve

equal incomes and improve the population's living standards. Economic development is accompanied by improvements in infrastructure and social, political, and institutional factors to facilitate the transformation of the economy (Myint and Krueger, 2016). It is necessary for a country to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development by providing more employment, higher incomes, improved goods and services, and modern technologies to increase production (Panth, 2020).

Owing to the dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations, the minerals, modern technologies, intercontinental trade relations, and industrial sectors among African states have not yet led to sustainable economic development. Sustainable economic development is a prerequisite for the survival and prosperity of a social and political system, as measured by various indicators. It is intensified by the individual income distribution and access to quality education and health services to promote economic development and as well as leading to high rates of life expectancy. Economic growth implies increased production or national income. If the production of goods or services increases in a country, the country's economic growth occurs. Economic development is, therefore, an increased production of a country in a particular year compared to its rate in the base year. At the macro level, the increase in the gross national product (GNP) or the gross domestic product (GDP) in a specific year compared to its rate in the base year is called economic development. The prices in a base year are used for calculating economic development because the calculated increase in the GNP is affected by the increase in the production rate, and the effect of the price increase or inflation is removed (Chu et al., 2012). Dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has disempowered African states from supporting economic development visions and projects by building a strong public service and creating an investor-friendly environment. It has disempowered them from supporting small business development, using state-owned enterprises effectively, and driving strategic investment initiatives.

Sustainable development is understood in this study as the ability for the citizens to have sustainable livelihoods and income to meet their present needs and the skills to use them in ways that do compromise the future generations efforts to meet their own needs. This means that sustainable development is centred on the values of equity, which implies fairness and equitability in the global system for the coming generations. This implies that sustainable development is an economic development that sustains current and future generations and enables them to achieve material comfort that is fairly distributed and within the limits of natural systems. That long, sustainable development is based on sustainable economic development that continually produces and reproduces goods and services and distributes them equally to citizens. Campbell (1996, p. 306) saw sustainable development as 'the long-term ability of a system to reproduce.' Beatley and Manning (1998, p. 3) said that sustainable development must include freedom and quality of life, and Abubakar (2017) sees it as a core concept within global development policy and agenda. Other scholars have conceptualised it as a development paradigm that calls for improving living standards without jeopardising the earth's ecosystems or causing environmental challenges such as deforestation and water and air pollution that can result in problems such as climate change and extinction of species (Benaim and Raftis, 2008; Browning and Rigolon, 2019).

Mohieldin (2017) argued that sustainable development is an approach to development that uses resources to allow them to continue to exist for others. Evers (2017) related sustainable development to structural principles for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend. In the African context, dependency syndrome has led to increased corruption and promoted political governance that does not protect the interests of the current population or future generations. Dependency syndrome has continued the exploitation of African resources, which has created underdevelopment conditions that intensify the political instability that affects the environment and society in Africa. Local economic plans within their jurisdiction cannot protect environmental, economic, and social systems. Therefore, in the presence of dependency syndrome, any developmental projects jeopardise the needs of current and future generations. However, sustainable development is a dynamic process that satisfies the needs of current and future generations through the production and reproduction of balanced local social, economic, and ecological systems and links local actions to global concerns.

3. Pitfalls of dependency syndrome on economic development

Dependency syndrome is linked to dependency theory, which emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s when African states achieved political independence, which expelled colonial dominance from the continent. Dependency syndrome challenged the dominant development paradigms of the time, particularly modernisation and liberal theories, because it highlights the structural inequalities and power imbalances inherent in the global system (Ferraro, 2004). This was a reaction to modernisation theory's assumption that all societies progress through similar stages of development and that mimicking Western industrialised nations is the key to development (Hills, 1994). However, dependency theory has faced criticism for its limitations in analysing social relationships and constructing a model of the world capitalist system (Friedmann, 1977). Despite these criticisms, it has significantly contributed to describing the consequences within dependent regions of the world system (Wallerstein, 1974).

Delacroix and Ragin (1981) stated that dependency syndrome has hindered the economic development growth of peripheral countries because it promotes reliance on developed economies, thus leading to chronic poverty that feeds political instability. Dependency syndrome hinders the growth of the economic development of African states because it has made them structurally dependent on more advanced economies, leading to unequal exchange dynamics (Özekin, 2023). This unequal relationship manifests through the export of primary commodities and cheap labour from Africa to developed nations in exchange for manufactured goods and capital, perpetuating a cycle of underdevelopment (Treacy, 2022). African states have failed to escape this dependency, hence remaining reliant on external actors for economic progress (Moser, 2022). Despite debates on its relevance, dependency syndrome continues to define Africa's international relations and its failure to achieve sustainable development amidst global economic hierarchies. It helps one to understand the ongoing

exploitation and domination of the global economy (Özekin, 2020). Dependency syndrome is embedded within imperialism and neocolonialism forces and has prevented the operationalisation of Africa's international relations in the global system. Although a shift from the dependency approach to the human development approach is emerging, as evidenced by today's emancipation in West Africa (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger) against former colonialists, their survival depends on overcoming dependency syndrome and the operationalisation of Africa's international relations. Chuquín (2019) argued that income and wealth distribution inequality is Africa's leading cause of underdevelopment. Dependency syndrome influences such inequality in economic income and wealth distribution.

Over the years, dependency syndrome in Africa has become a powerful tool for coloniality and a tool for global capitalism that hinders economic development on the continent. Scholars have stated that dependency syndrome is an enemy of economic growth (Ateş and Bayraktar, 2005; Treacy, 2022). This has thus made it a source of economic instability that increases the political violence that engulfs African states in poverty and underdevelopment status. Moreover, Farny (2020) suggested that dependency syndrome has remained an ugly tool for global inequalities in the current international relations of world states. Özekin (2020) emphasised the need to free the global economy from dependency syndrome. However, the superpower state and emerging economies have maintained dependency syndrome policy in Africa, an issue that still holds validity in Africa's economic development endeavours. In Africa, dependency syndrome has increased socioeconomic disparities (Kvangraven, 2023). It has prevented inclusive economic growth and has remained a valuable framework for understanding the failure to achieve sustainable development in Africa. Smith and Lester (2023) argued that the global capitalist system is inherently exploitative and asymmetrical, with core countries exploiting and dominating peripheral countries for economic gain, thus promoting dependency syndrome in Africa.

Özekin (2023) and Ricci (2022) argued that most dependency scholars believe that underdevelopment, which hinders African states from achieving economic development, results from internal deficiencies and unequal relations within international relations caused by dependency syndrome. Dependency syndrome is rooted in several principles of inequality and emphasises the unequal power relations between African states, developed states, and emerging economies (Yan-Feng, 2011). Ferraro (2004) stated that dependency syndrome affects economic growth in developed countries, making them unable to achieve economic development for sustainable development. Enuka (2018) argued that the concept of structural inequality that defines Africa's international relations results from dependency syndrome and is a crucial aspect of the global economic system.

4. Discussions

The first finding showed that dependency syndrome has created divisions among the world states which prevent the achievement of sustainable development. Dependency syndrome has deepened divisions between core and peripheral countries, where African states have been tied to the periphery, making it impossible to achieve economic development that promotes sustainable development. These divisions are

characterised by the dominance and exploitation of peripheral countries by core countries, leading to underdevelopment and poverty in the former (Ganguly, 2010). Farny (2020) argued that dependency syndrome has created situations of inferiority that intensify subordination and exploitation. The study's contribution shows that dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has created mental slavery and remained a tool for neo-colonialism. Niyitunga (2014) argued that dependency syndrome promotes mental slavery and neo-colonialism in that it makes the debtor become a slave to the creditor while the creditor becomes the slave master. This has characterised inequality and intensified internal divisions that affect Africa's economic growth and political stability.

The study's contribution also shows that inequality, neo-colonialism, and mental slavery promote unequal exchange, which contributes to environmental degradation in Africa while suppressing resource consumption opportunities for their populations (Jorgenson et al., 2009). Jorgenson et al. (2009) argued that lower-income countries that export more to higher-income countries exhibit lower consumption-based environmental demand. Scholars have argued that the prevalent legacy of dependency syndrome has increased subordination in Africa, leading to economic subordination and psychological and material damage (Miliotis and Sotiropoulos, 2009; Nakano, 2013). Hein (1992) argued that foreign investment resulting from foreign aid is detrimental to economic growth. Africa's international relations, which rely on foreign aid, hinder economic growth and prevent international trade and the development of industrialisation, which are fundamental for economic development. Amin (1983) stated that reliance on external aid perpetuates economic retardation and impedes economic growth as well as human growth. Chaperon and Bramwell (2013) stated that the complex and multifaceted nature of external dependency perpetuates underdevelopment.

The study's contribution shows that the prevalence of dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has paved the way for neocolonialism and coloniality forces to thrive and flourish in Africa. In the context of this study, neocolonialism is where a state is independent of external forces and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. This means that the state's politico-economic system, developmental projects, and political policy are directed from the outside. Nkrumah (1966) argued that external powers and nations from the Global North directly control a state's political and economic affairs. Africa's international relations have not yet addressed these gaps, and African states continue to receive foreign aid from the Global North, thus maintaining dependency syndrome in Africa. Thus, neocolonialism threatens sustainable development because it perpetuates dependency syndrome by relying on foreign aid (Vengroff, 1975).

The third finding showed that dependency syndrome has prevented the growth of internal factors that enhance the ability of the state to achieve sustainable development. Emeh (2013) and Turhan (2018) argued that dependency syndrome inhibits the growth of internal factors, such as governance and domestic policies, and prevents them from shaping development outcomes. In Africa's international relations, dependency syndrome has instead influenced African elites to perpetuate underdevelopment. Bienefeld (1988) stated that dependency syndrome is linked to imperialism and coloniality, thus intensifying the global economic imbalance that inhibits economic

development and promotes underdevelopment. In the context of Africa's international relations, the study's contributions shows that dependency syndrome affects social relationships within African states and affects geographical observations that are valuable for constructing a model of intra-African trade that promotes trade relations which lead to economic development in Africa. Friedmann and Wayne (1977) argued that dependency syndrome disempowers states, enslaves their political leaders, and deprives them of the ability to build local industries that promote economic development. For this reason, dependency syndrome constructs a model of the world capitalist system that promotes economic imbalance and insecurity in Africa. Matthews (1981) criticised dependency syndrome for economically and politically enslaving peripheral countries by establishing unequal economic structures perpetuating poverty and underdevelopment.

The fourth finding of this study showed that dependency syndrome has handicapped Africa's mind and thinking in terms of generating their own income to support their endeavours towards achieving sustainable development. It has thus led to inferiority complex status which is a hindrance to sustainable development. The study's contribution shows that dependency syndrome makes people who would advance development projects for the mentally handicapped to promote the development agenda. Those states that are facing sustainable development and have moved from developing to middle-class economies have, first, overcome dependency syndrome and its associated effects, such as an inferiority complex. This point has been supported by Adler (2013) who argued that the feelings of inferiority disempower people from changing their economic and political statuses. Inferiority complex is an enemy to economic growth and economic development for sustainable development, as it affects the relationship between political leaders and ordinary people. Inferiority complex makes people feel worthlessness, powerlessness, inadequacy, and low self-esteem (Adler, 2013). It becomes a source of hate, envy and resentment, subordination, which threaten anyone's efforts to have autonomy to decide for themselves.

On the other hand, low self-esteem is associated with a lack of confidence and negative feelings about oneself (Yang, 2023). As opposed to high self-esteem which promotes economic development and growth, while people with low self-esteem become lazy do not work because of fearing to commit mistakes (Yang, 2023). The study's contribution shows that the inferiority complex that exists in Africa is the effect of dependency syndrome, which has caused Africans and their political leaders to lose their individual decision-making ability and shift it to either former colonialists or to other emerging economies in the global system, such as China, Russia, Brazil, India, and South Africa.

The fifth finding presented that dependency syndrome has robbed African states autonomy to decide on their domestic affairs and political economic affairs that promote sustainable development. The loss of political and economic autonomy in domestic affairs is a painful social experience that has retarded the achievement of economic growth and development, which has transformed the continent from poverty to sustainable development. Through an inferiority complex on the side of Africans, which is an effect of dependency syndrome, Chaperon and Bramwell (2013) argued that Africa has remained poor and that underdevelopment and chronic poverty have become rampant and unbearable. The status of powerlessness in Africa has affected

Africans' ability to achieve economic development and growth that would help the continent move towards sustainable development. Niyitunga (2014) argued that dependency syndrome crippled Africa and chronic poverty because every time leaders await aid from the external environment, they remain slaves and mentally colonised. Niyitunga (2014) further argued that Africa has become debtors, while the West remained creditor. This has made the creditor to remain slave masters, and the debtors to become slaves. With that status of slavery, the study's contribution shows that achieving economic development that would lead to sustainable development becomes difficult. Dependency syndrome has created modern slavery in Africa, impeding sustainable development on the continent.

The sixth finding showed that dependency syndrome in Africa's international relations has promoted laziness that hinders the possibility to work towards achieving economic growth that leads to sustainable development. Dependency syndrome induces laziness, affecting any efforts to move towards sustainable development. The study's contributions shows that laziness is terrible disease and a barrier to sustainable development because it affects one's creativity and increases unemployment. Laziness seems to be a pervasive concept in everyday human social life and is used for explaining the behaviour of encountered individuals in a given task or activity. The study's contribution also shows that laziness prevents the achievement of sustainable because it affects media and public debates and is attributed to the prevalence of unemployment and poverty. The concept seems to imply that an individual not acting or performing as expected is not doing so because of causes controllable to herself, often referring to individual effort. An emphasis on the individual's effort is also evident in research concerning attitudes toward the unemployed, where a distinction is often drawn between individuals who are genuinely unable to work because of their laziness status (Pauw et al., 2008). For unemployed people, people who explain unemployment in individualistic terms such as laziness are more inclined to think that the demands and conditions for unemployed people must be enhanced by, for example, lowering unemployment benefits (Pauw et al., 2008).

The seventh finding showed that dependency syndrome in Africa's international relations has promoted laziness that hinders economic growth which is a prerequisite for a state to achieve sustainable development. Dependency syndrome hinders economic growth, as it confines dependent countries to being deciphered as states that lack the general capacity for autonomous growth. Thus, if one asserts that the position of less developed nations is structurally dependent and that first-world status necessarily entails economic autonomy, then economic prosperity is unattainable (Sanchez, 2003). Dependency syndrome makes people perceive economic equity, autonomy, and development as unattainable dreams. This has led to underdevelopment in Africa, with capitalism favouring more fortunate nations in terms of financial resources. A profound relationship exists between economics and politics; conditions impact economic institutions, policies, and outcomes (Sanchez, 2003). The study's contribution here shows that the costs of dependency syndrome on sustainable development include institutional overload and capacity weakening, loss of sovereignty, and weakened ownership of policies and plans, with consequent sustainability problems. These effects include revenue instability, repetitive budgeting, budget fragmentation, wage distortions, and lower tax effort, with severe monetary

and fiscal policy management implications. They also undermine accountability and democratic decision-making (Bräutigam and Botchwey, 1999).

The study's contribution shows that dependency syndrome affects the growth of the private sector as it leads to the crowding out effect. Moreover, it affects and destroys the growth of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). SOEs promote sustainable development because they are significant stakeholders and contributors to economic growth and support and promote urban economic growth and development (Sultan, 2014). Moreover, they provide highly significant structuring elements that influence development patterns within cities, such as transportation networks, bulk infrastructure, energy, and ICT infrastructure, to facilitate the ability to achieve sustainable economic growth (Kowalski et al., 2013). Dependency syndrome in Africa has led local governments to tighten credit policies and consequently squeeze private sector investment. The attitude of always depending on large amounts of external assistance reduces incentives for indigenous local and homegrown organisations to carry out development projects. It inhibits the promotion of local fundraising opportunities because it destroys people's ability to be creative and conduct their own business. Thus, dependency syndrome affects people's responsibility and capability to establish good quality governance that advances developmentalism opportunities which promote sustainable development (Bräutigam and Botchwey, 1999).

As dependency syndrome results from the culture of depending on external donors and forces in every sector of life, the eighth finding showed that it encourages the flow of foreign aid, thus leading to aid dependence. Aid dependence, on the other hand, affects the achievement of sustainable development because it makes people lazy and dumb in regard to economic opportunities, and it instils political instability, leading to increasing poverty and decreasing economic growth. In other words, aid dependence might have led to sustainable development, but this is not the case in Africa. Owing to the prevalence of dependency syndrome within the continent's international relations, aid dependence is a threat to sustainable development because it affects economic development and creates and embraces avenues for corruption, mental and physical laziness, and dependency to thrive. Therefore, this negatively impacts most African countries' economic growth and development and prevents them from achieving sustainable development.

The study's contribution shows that dependency syndrome within the Africa's international relations has affected the rule of law and governance. Foreign aid can also pose a challenge to the rule of law and democratic reforms. This is because when foreign aid is provided to autocratic governments, it creates a larger pool of resources for government officials and political elites to fight over for their selfish and personal gains, which may be detrimental because it may hinder the adoption of policy reforms and stable policies (Brautigam and Knack, 2004, p. 255). Conflicts, political instability, ballooning debt, civil wars, and coup d'états in Africa have been caused by foreign aid, which has afforded these countries the financial means to carry out the aforementioned atrocities (Brautigam and Knack, 2004, p. 255). This financial and foreign aid has disrupted the quality of governance, as calculated by the rule of law indicators and corruption, because foreign aid is viewed by corrupt leaders as a tool for power (Knack, 2004, p. 253). Therefore, individuals lacking the sincere intent to use the funds for reform or development would aim to remain in power to gain control

of the funds. Knack (2004, p. 253) stipulated that aid bolsters coup attempts and political instability because receiving aid and controlling the government is profitable, thus reducing the likelihood of promoting the rule of law and democratic governance. Political elites of African countries have little or no motivation for reform, as massive amounts of money in the form of foreign aid provide numerous fringe benefits to them, such as salary increments, luxurious vehicles and houses that would ordinarily be unavailable or scarce (Knack, 2004, p. 253). As a result, the rule of law reforms that would lead African states to the trajectory of sustainable development are shunned because of the aforementioned benefits of remaining on the status quo.

The study's contribution shows that dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has inhibited the growth of local industries. Foreign aid kills local industries in developing countries. Foreign aid in the form of food aid given to poor or underdeveloped countries is responsible for the death of local farm industries in poor countries (Adamu, 2013). Local farmers leave business because they cannot compete with the abundance of cheap imported aid food from poor countries in response to humanitarian crises and natural disasters. Large inflows of money that come into developing countries from the developed world in foreign aid increase the price of locally produced goods and products (Adamu, 2013). Owing to their high prices, the exports of local goods are reduced, and local industries and producers are discouraged, thus affecting economic development growth for sustainable development.

The study's contribution shows that foreign aid has never benefitted Africa because, apart from the laziness it induces in Africa, its conditions have never made it easier for African states to achieve sustainable development. Donor countries establish policy standards and economic systems, enabling them to control development projects and other economic opportunities. Dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has influenced and promoted the disarticulation of African markets and trades, thus affecting the realisation of sustainable development. There is a massive distortion of local African marketing centres or routes, thus slowing economic growth. Dependency syndrome also affects the achievement of sustainable development because it distorts the African pattern of economic development by reducing the production of goods, markets, traders, transport, the provision of social amenities, and patterns of urbanisation. Manufacturing and the growth of local industries that promote economic development for sustainable development have been discouraged.

The industries that are partly encouraged and supported must receive financial support from the First World to continue controlling them and preventing their growth toward sustainable development. Moreover, other encouraged local industries are those built by neo-colonialists in Africa to facilitate the extraction and export of raw materials for their benefit. The dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has prevented the rise of a revolution that would bring about total independence and, thus, total direction toward sustainable development. For example, there has been a lack of win-win negotiations between Africans and neo-colonialists, causing African raw materials to be bought at a low price (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012, p. 51). At the same time, manufactured goods from the developed world are traded with Africans at very high prices (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012, p. 52). This

situation has underdeveloped Africa and enhanced chronic poverty, thus preventing Africa from achieving achievement of sustainable development.

The study's contribution shows that the lack of a comprehensive transport system in Africa, which results from the dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations, affects sustainable development in Africa. The achievement of sustainable development primarily depends on the robust infrastructure that leads to solid transport network systems that not only join different towns and rural areas but also province to another and country to another to facilitate intra-African trade. A robust transport network system would also lead to effective communication and development, making the trade and transportation of goods within the continent possible and easy. However, dependency syndrome has caused neo-colonialists (such as former colonies, France, the British, Belgium, and currently the United States and emerging economies such as China in Africa) to build a transport network system that facilitates their evacuation of raw materials from Africa to places where they can easily export to their countries. There has been no firm intention to build and develop a robust transport network system built by Africans and maintained by them to achieve economic growth and sustainable income that would improve the lives of Africans.

The ninth finding showed that the prevalence of dependency syndrome within the Africa's international relations has weakened Africans and the AU agency such that their interactions with other states in the global system continue to deepen poverty. International trade can bring economic prosperity and development that make sustainable development achievable (Irwin, 2020). Irwin (2020) argued that trade enhances the possibility of achieving sustainable development because it strengthens export-led economic growth, economic diversification, and industrialisation. It also promotes efficient resource allocation, positive income effects, technological innovation, and poverty reduction and alleviation (Irwin, 2020). This nexus between trade and sustainable development has been presented, and different scholars show that increasing international trade leads to economic growth and development opportunities in society (Cuyvers and De Meyer, 2012; Mosley, 2011). Unfortunately, dependency syndrome has prevented the growth of intra-African trade, which could lead to sustainable development in Africa. Instead, it leads to the promotion of external trade with developed countries and emerging economies. This issue has left Africa impoverished; it has prevented sustainable development due to the win-lose principle that controls such trade.

The study's contribution shows that dependency syndrome within the Africa's international relations not only entrenched laziness, but also made corruption prevalent, which, in turn, has affected the growth of development aid in Africa. While development aid has led to essential sources of investment for poor countries because of the scourges of political violence and insecurities, it has become ineffective against corruption in Africa. Empirical analysis shows that countries that receive more foreign funds show higher levels of corruption (Brautigam and Knack, 2004, p. 255). Foreign development aid in Africa has encouraged a culture of rent seeking, and government officials and leaders have used their position and authority to increase their personal wealth at the expense of ordinary citizens (Bailey, 2008).

The study's contribution shows that development aid has benefitted African political leaders, as they amass enormous sums of personal wealth for themselves from

the development aid they receive (Alesina and Weder, 2002; Sharma, 2011). This means that these leaders and authorities enrich themselves and do not use the aid provided for its intended purpose (Sharma, 2011). These are the cases of countries transiting from political violence to peacebuilding, such as Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan; development aid has been used to enrich the political leadership class, while ordinary citizens are left in poverty. This is the reason that conflict recurrence in some African states has become the norm. One can see that the dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has made development aid to be misused by bureaucratic and corrupt government leaders, thus making it difficult to achieve sustainable development in Africa. Considering the above, foreign aid increases corruption, as many African leaders divert it to their private foreign bank accounts or use it to fund projects specifically for political elites (Knack, 2004, p. 253). Owing to the institutionalised dependency syndrome that has made corruption thrive in African governments, the effects of development aid on sustainable development have been hindered (Boon and Bundhoo, 2017).

5. Conclusion

The dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has crippled African institutions of development rather than improving them to achieve sustainable development. It has handicapped efforts to achieve sustainable development in Africa. Further, it has prevented the growth of local industries, manufacturing, and trade relations between African states. It has promoted neocolonialism and made it alive in Africa, preventing economic growth and development because it has distorted and disarticulated African resources that would have been used to achieve sustainable development. The dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations has promoted chronic poverty and social inequality, which are key obstacles to achieving sustainable development in Africa. The United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are based on achieving sustainable development and are only four years away, and dependency syndrome in Africa is still far from being overcome. While other states in the global system have made significant progress in some areas, African states are still at risk of being left behind. There is a need for African states through the AU, a continental agency, to overcome dependency syndrome and reform their international relations with one another and the external world. This reform would enhance intra-African trade relations and develop a robust transport network system that promotes economic growth and development for sustainable development. There is a need for the realisation of continental sovereignty with one foreign policy goal geared towards utilising Africa's natural resources to set up sustainable development trajectories. A collective effort would be made through continental planning diplomacy to address dependency syndrome in each member state of the AU. This would encourage the African states, starting with the AU, to refrain from foreign aid and generate their economic finances to support their developmental projects without any conditions. This would enable Africa's international relations to enhance win-win situations when dealing with first-world states and emerging economies and establish fair partnerships that foster intra-African trade relations and external trade relations that enable Africa to achieve a win-win situation in the global market.

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