



Covid-19 pandemic and international commerce in Southern Africa: documentary review

 *Kansilembo Freddy Aliamutu* ^{(a)*}  *Msizi Mkhize* ^(b)



^(a) *Department of Financial Accounting, School of Accounting, Economics and Finance, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa*

^(b) *Professor, Department of Financial Accounting, School of Accounting, Economics and Finance, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 12 May 2024

Received in rev. form 24 June 2024

Accepted 20 July 2024

Keywords:

Southern Africa, Covid 19 pandemic, World Financial Crisis, International commerce, and Tourism.

JEL Classification:

F15, R1

ABSTRACT

International commerce across southern Africa has increased significantly in recent years. This phenomenon has been replicating what has been happening on the African continent as a whole, and it does indicate that the region has significant growth in economic opportunities. Hence, the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted international commerce and caused significant concern. The emphasis of this work was on the global economic interconnectivity in the Southern African region prior to and during the Covid-19 pandemic. The main objective of this study was to determine how the Covid-19 pandemic influenced international commerce in Southern Africa. The study was qualitative in nature, as well as secondary data collection methods were used. The research used a documentary review as its analysis method. This included compiling and analysing more than 60 online resources relating to various and relevant the Covid-19 pandemic and international commerce from several past research. The study found that the world economy, particularly the economies of Southern African nations, was encountering certain difficulties before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was stated that as a consequence of the pandemic, Southern African countries implemented a slew of steps in an effort to overcome the issues posed by the Covid-19 pandemic interruptions.

© 2024 by the authors. Licensee SSBFNET, Istanbul, Turkey. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the usual flow of daily life, creating an unstable society. Most notably, limitations on the movement of both products and persons have made managing a company extremely challenging (Mataba and Ismail, 2021b). As a result of the commerce disruptions, the majority of countries throughout the world have had to devise new means of modifying their economies (Ikwegbue et al., 2021). As an uncertain prospect approaches, governments must devise strategies to overcome the problems presented by the Covid-19 outbreak and re-establish commerce.

Under Southern Africa, the probable future orientation of international commerce is additionally determined and addressed. Southern Africa is a regional economic organisation formed and operated by Southern African nations (Opote et al., 2020). Its goal is to promote political, economic, and safety cooperation between its member countries, as well as integration into the region, for the purpose of accomplishing stability, safety, and riches (Mutizwa, 2020). Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are the 10 nations that are members of Southern Africa (Kouletakis et al., 2023). From its foundation, Southern Africa has instilled a feeling of regional connection and a culture of collaboration amongst Southern African individuals and governments, resulting in strengthened safety in the region, amongst other benefits (Magezi, 2022). Southern Africa has produced guidelines in a variety of fields of collaboration that serve as the legal foundation for member-state interaction. Despite several remarkable successes, Southern Africa has met plenty of obstacles and constraints (Lekgau and Tichaawa, 2021). Masiya et al. (2021) claimed that Southern Africa adopted the concept of development integrating, recognising the political and financial differences of geographic regions incorporating nations, such as their different manufacturing buildings, trading patterns,

* Corresponding author. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3870-7549

financial resources, growth targets, organisational connections, as well as distribution of resources processes. Zindi and Shava (2022) said that Southern Africa exists to address the manufacturing, infrastructural, and productivity hurdles that result from the region's inadequate development. Asante Antwi et al. (2021) highlighted that this strategy additionally provides the benefit of supplementing commerce facilitation and long-term remedial measures aimed at protecting the poorest nations against disruptions caused by the elimination of commerce restrictions.

Southern Africa, of which they are members of SADC Unified Vision, is outlined in Article 5 of the Agreement, as modified, in addition to in the Reports on the Assessment of activities of SADC organisations, which also includes the organization's policies and initiatives. Fischer et al. (2023) mentioned that Southern Africa's basic initiatives emphasise unity and growth in the economy, the establishment of adequate institutions and methods for mobilising the resources required, and the formulation of policies to remove commerce barriers. Southern Africa understands that economic advancement and growth cannot be accomplished in environments marked by political discrimination, a lack of respect for the rule of law, fraud, civil unrest, and conflict. Fubah and Moos (2022) highlighted that all of these issues and situations create a negative, arduous loop that signifies great poverty as well as under development. Gamede (2022) contend that Southern African nations have agreed to "advance similar political ideals, infrastructure, and additional commonalities that are passed on throughout democratic, trustworthy, and efficient institutions" (Southern Africa as a member of the SADC Convention Section 5).

In addition, a large number of the nations in Southern Africa are members of various local and international foreign commerce organisations, including the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the South African Customs Union (SACU), and are signatories to several commerce treaties with the United States of America as well as the European Union. Mogendi et al. (2022) note that liberalising commerce is a critical component of southern Africa's regional into the regional economy. In 2019, intra- Southern Africa exports for products totalled around US\$ 34.8 billion, while intra-South Africa imports totalled approximately US\$ 32.6 billion. Gold, nickel, salt, beef, copper, equipment and electrical equipment, vehicles and transportation equipment, and textiles are among the region's exports. Obayelu et al. (2021) mentioned that diamonds, petroleum, automobiles, medications, groceries, equipment, electrical items, chemical goods, metallic materials, clothing, forests, and papers are among the most important imports. Shinyekwa et al. (2021) highlighted that the trading position of this region is strongly based on international commerce pricing and demand for raw commodities and natural assets.

In 2018, the visible commerce balance showed a surplus of USD 312 million. Onafowokan et al. (2021) said that diminishing national economic activity and expansion limitations will very certainly lead to significant decreases in SACU pooling in the coming years, as well as via retrospective revisions. Mustafa (2023) note that the economic activity has decreased as a consequence of a large reduction in foreign commerce and methods to support the economy, such as tax deferrals, causing the government to revise projected revenue collections for the fiscal year.

Mineral revenues, which generally make up more than a third of entire national revenue gathered in the region, are also expected to decline dramatically. Taher (2021) contended that it should be observed that while there have been downward modifications, which mainly represent commerce policy unpredictability, and several market economies around the world as they continue to impede the international economy, particularly in regard to exports and imports in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. Jain (2020) claimed that several nations throughout the world have faced commerce-related issues in the past few years, prior to the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic. Such conditions were exacerbated by the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had a detrimental influence on international commerce. Mold and Mveyange (2020) emphasised that, overall, regional international commerce has faced a variety of problems throughout the years.

Other obstacles have also hampered the growth of a few of Africa's potential countries in terms of foreign commerce. According to Kassa and Grace (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic's effects are making it "difficult for most companies around the world to maintain their financial gear turning, considering decreased sales and an elevated degree of unpredictability." Rogerson and Rogerson (2020) comment that COVID-19 "has been one of the greatest devastating and terrible pandemics of the contemporary era" for international commerce. This pandemic differs from many past calamities and emergencies that have earlier afflicted the international commerce. Giddy and Rogerson (2021) contend that there appears to be no return to the previous 'normal'. Industries requiring direct interaction between consumers and vendors of services have been harmed the most by movement limitations and social alienation. The paper investigates Southern Africa's international commerce connectivity prior to and following the Covid-19 pandemic. The main objective of this study was to determine how the Covid-19 pandemic influenced international commerce in Southern Africa.

Methodology

The main source of data involved documentary review. Secondary data includes information that was not gathered from the original or main sources. The research used a documentary review as its analysis method. This included compiling and analysing more than 60 online resources relating to various and relevant the Covid-19 pandemic and international commerce from several past research. This research explored internet databases for relevant research publications using the key phrases "Covid-19 pandemic", "international commerce", "Southern Africa", "World Financial Crisis", and "Tourism". The search outcomes provided several previous research, totalling over 250. From this selection, around 60 sources containing the five key terms were chosen. The study was selected based on the requirements of (i) empirical research, (ii) international commerce as a dependent variable, (iii) Covid-19

pandemic, Southern Africa, World Financial Crisis, and Tourism as independent variables. The research collected data on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on commerce in Southern Africa using secondary data, including those published as well as unpublished publications. Governmental papers and news reports, policy papers, planning papers, publications, online sources, and research papers were used for collecting data. The data was laid out as well using themes and subsections. In addition, content analysis was employed. The research used content analysis to examine books, pamphlets, news items, other written material, and presentations.

Results and Discussion

Commerce modernisation is the procedure of expanding markets to international commerce by lowering commerce obstacles such as taxes and non-tariff obstacles to products that are exported or imported (Mataba and Ismail, 2021a). The effect of Covid-19 is transforming the global economic landscape, especially the Southern African region. As pressure grows, industries are acting quickly to develop adaptability, while governments mobilise to protect citizens while controlling the financial and social ramifications. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the world economy, especially the Southern African economy, was suffering certain issues. This resulted from the long-term effects of rising commerce protectionist policies, disagreements about commerce between major trading partners, commodity prices dropping, and financial concerns throughout Europe because of Brexit (Asiedu, 2021).

Table 1: World Economic Forecast management

Year	International Economy	Southern Africa
2018	3.6%	4.5%
2019	2.9%	3.7
2020	3%	3.9%

Source: IMF (2020)

According to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) World Economic Forecast management for April 2020, economic growth has slowed from 3.6 % 2018 to 2.9 % in 2019 (Oulmane et al., 2020b). The international economy decreased by a negative 3 % in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, a figure that was worse than the economic drop that followed the 2008-09 international financial crisis. Because of the danger of Covid-19, economic expansion in Southern African nations fell to an averaged of 3.7 % in 2019 from 4.5 % in 2018 and 3.9% in 2020 (Agarwal and Chonzi, 2020). The slowdown in development is mostly due to a drop in internal demand, which slowed more than expected due to difficulties in the non-banking financial industry, as well as a worsening in the increase in credit.

The downward modification mainly reflects the commerce policy unpredictability, which continues to impede the smooth running of the international economy, particularly in exports and manufacturing, in the face of the complicated circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (Luke and MacLeod, 2021). Before the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, several nations had problems with commerce throughout the world. South Africa's (2020) forecast growth for India to be 4.8 % in 2019, down from 6.8 % in 2018. The Indian economy has been harmed by industry-specific issues in the automobile and real estate industries, as well as chronic uncertainty about the financial health of enterprises that are not in the banking business (MacLeod and Guepie, 2023). In addition, expansion in Mexico fell sharply in the first half of 2019 because of increased policy ambiguity, budget under-execution, and certain important temporary variables.

Despite a slight boost in energy supplies, economic expansion in South Africa remained stagnant at 0.4 % (Luke and MacLeod, 2021). Due to unresolved differences with regard to the wider economic relationship between the US and China, as well as necessary within economic regulating integration to reduce unlawful banking transactions, the Chinese economy's expansion fell by 6.1 % in 2019 from 6.6 % a year earlier (MacLeod and Guepie, 2023). It is critical to emphasise that the Covid-19 outbreak occurred against a backdrop of global economic uncertainty already, economies were having difficulty, and this exacerbated the negative effect on international commerce.

A review of the situation of foreign commerce in Sub-Saharan Africa finds a mixed bag. overall, regional international commerce has faced a variety of problems over the years. This is attributable to a variety of variables, including decreased agriculture and mining production, as well as poor industrial efficiency (Mold, 2020). Other issues that have hampered the growth of some of Africa's potential economies including societal upheaval, which continues to grow worse in and throughout the continent, posing new obstacles. There have also been weather-related calamities, which have included inundation in eastern Africa and droughts in southern Africa. Such difficulties are not specific to Southern Africa. Hence, based on the African Union (2020), Africa's international commerce has grown significantly during the last two decades.

As a result, a number of African nations have seen significant economic development. Despite the fact that there seems to remain increased optimism in Africa's development capability when it comes to international commerce and overall economic success, there are still reservations about Africa's ability to maintain continuous high levels of economic expansion (Luke, 2023). One important factor causing this lack of clarity is Africa's main economies' stubborn dependency on global commodities prices. In the absence of Covid-19, the initial starting point assumption S0 predicted a 3.4% expansion across Africa in 2020 (Oulmane et al., 2020a). in

addition, following the international spread of the pandemic, feasible and optimistic predictions indicate an equivalent absence of unwelcome economic expansion in African countries in -0.8% (a loss of 4.18 percentage points contrasted to the beginning extension) and -1.1 percent (a loss of 4.51 percentage points contrasting to the beginning estimation) in 2020 (Songwe et al., 2021). With such a severe effect on commerce and the economy of various nations, nations must exercise caution while implementing preventative methods during the present economic downturn to ensure that commerce remains intact completely.

The corona virus spreads in surges across the entire region. The mining industry is one of the largest and most lucrative sectors in the region in terms of significance and contribution to regional GDP (Lungo, 2019). The economy of the region's countries was thrown into disarray by a shock to the structure caused by the economic crisis in 2008-2009. Due to travel restrictions, the sales of a few of the most precious natural resources from nations around the region were postponed (Banga et al., 2020). This impeded sales by causing international financial markets to freeze, preventing banks from financing potential purchasers. The Covid-19 outbreak not simply cause astonishment, but it additionally revealed the country's widely recognised economic problems, which include a restricted economic foundation based on the export of diamonds and a worrying growth in budgetary shortfalls in an environment of rising joblessness and poor people (Abrego et al., 2020). It needs to be highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic occurred at a time in which the Southern African economy was already experiencing enormous economic issues, necessitating massive structural adjustments (Parshotam, 2018). One of the major issues was the slowing of economic development, which was insufficient to raise real earnings and create enough employment possibilities. According to labour information, the total labour force in 2018 was 141 481, while it was 142 073 in 2019 (Zgovu, 2021).

Table 2: Labour force of Southern Africa

Labour force	
2018	141 481
2019	142 073

After the severity of the Covid-19 outbreak came clear, many Southern African nations announced a nationwide state of urgency. A set of constraints were implemented, including social isolation and travel restrictions (Hollington, 2021). It could be emphasised, however, that the World Health Organization's (WHO) designation of Covid-19 as a "public health crisis of international importance" caused a failure of markets for many nations throughout international commerce. The pandemic represents an important danger to Southern Africa 's international commerce and has undermined any progress made in the process of commerce liberalisation in recent years, alongside its effect on commerce being greater than that of the 2008-09 International Economic Crisis (Byiers, 2023). This is mostly because the Covid-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on both collective supply as well as demand, causing disruptions in international value chains, notably the commerce of critical resources. Several Southern African nations launched an interruption in the middle of this medical emergency in order to avoid the virus from propagating more thoroughly, resulting in restricted transportation of people, products, and activities. As an outcome of this, economic activity came to a standstill. Governments adopted these policies to protect their economies (Siamabele, 2021).

Hence, this cushion was inadequate as economic growth is expected to slow by 2% prior to recovering to about 3.8% in late 2021 depending on their continued existence and the pandemic's power (Sign and van der Ven, 2020). As a result, the drop in output caused by the pandemic, and the breakdown of the transportation infrastructure, has had major effects for Southern African manufacturers and consumers. Furthermore, travel limitations imposed by social isolation measures to prevent the virus from proliferating have further curtailed the accessibility of employment and transportation, leading in the shutdown of various interlinked regions of the international economy (Magwape, 2023). It is obvious that Southern African nations have been the most hit. Those nations have also been particularly susceptible, being overly reliant on foreign commodity trading.

Furthermore, the inability of nations to collaborate, especially in regards of how to manage this tragedy, has deteriorated the international economic position, adding to international conflicts and distrust between commerce partners (Tröster and Janechová, 2021). Nations have faced incompatible decisions in the midst of these come across and unpredictability: they are able to choose to embrace geopolitical competition and shape a globe that is split up, unrestricted diametrically opposed and separatist, or they are able to call on the whole world to confront this calamity by means of shared action. In the contemporary period, there has existed a purposeful movement away from 'hyper globalization' and into state-led the formation of nations and independence in order to fight against future vulnerabilities (Aliamutu and Mkhize, 2024c).

Nonetheless, this appears to be an interim remedy to the problem, and in the long run, states will have to deal with the practicalities associated with international cooperation and interconnectedness (Kouam and Sundjo, 2022). Achieving a long-term approach involves small and incremental moves towards developing an additional common emergency approach and encouraging similar standards and practices (ALIAMUTU and MKHIZE, 2024a).The pandemic had an important effect on Southern African nations, forcing them to cease economic activity in order to adhere to national severe social estrangement regulations. Most commerce and investment development initiatives were either postponed or halted because of the pandemic and the requirement to curb its growth.

This has had a significant impact on Southern Africa's economic benefits, especially for firms that rely on foreign commerce. a few of the negative effects of this involve the absence of opportunities to secure potential overseas markets, collaborations, and other benefits connected with corporate involvement in Exporter and Investment Development Campaigns (Panda, 2022). For example, the pandemic has caused the cancellation of the annual International Expo Botswana, which provides an opportunity for firms to meet potential overseas customers, shareholders, and collaborative partnerships.

The exhibition also allows Botswana enterprises to investigate one another as possible sources of raw materials and promote the National Trademark to the international market (Amadichukwu, 2021). The postponement had other negative consequences, including lost revenue for several hotels for lodging, meeting facilities, food and transportation businesses that would have offered such amenities during the Expo. Although some businesses may have profited from the lockdown and pandemic by cranking up the manufacture of needed services and goods, unforeseen limitations on travel hampered their capacity to procure manufacturing materials easily. Manufacturing was also hampered by restrictions on the issue of licences and other requirements for social distancing (Draper et al., 2018).

The Covid-19 crisis is having an economic and political influence on the whole world, including Africa. Several critical sectors of the African economy are currently in collapse as a result of the pandemic. Travel and Tourism, air travel, and the oil industry are especially among those which have obviously damaged industries. A variety of problems have hampered Southern Africa 's economic progress during the last decade. Due to the African Union (2021), the drop in raw material prices that began in 2014 marked the end of the unprecedented growth in development that started in the 1970s. As a result, the economy's expansion has slowed, from an average of + 5% during 2000 and 2014 to + 3.3% through 2015 and 2019. As a result, the short period of happiness and exuberance (ALIAMUTU and MKHIZE, 2024b).

In addition, due to the negative impact on significant components of economic activity that include tourist attractions, travelling, and exported goods, as well as diminishing costs of consumer products and services and reducing government funding for funding public expenditures, such a positive estimate of inflation rates in 2020 seems unlikely (Mataba and Ismail, 2021a). According to the African Union (2020), there currently is one probable situation that could take place as a consequence of the pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on Southern African nations, and the situation appears to be deteriorating rapidly. The disruption of the international financial system via international value chains, rapid drops in the cost of commodities and fiscal revenues, and the installation of transportation and social restrictions in a number of African nations represent a few of the primary causes of the unfavourable development. Southern African commerce is expected to shrink by 17.1% in 2020 (African Union) (Olaniyan, 2021). As a result, the monetary damage is estimated to be over US\$270 billion. Hospitality is one of the biggest and most significant industries of the Southern African nations' economies (Ajambo and Emebinah, 2021). Tourism, a significant aspect of economic development for Southern African nations, has been adversely harmed by Covid-19 due to simplicity of travel restrictions, border closures, and social alienation, according to the African Union (2020). According to IATA estimates, Africa's aviation transport industry has a US\$ 55.8 billion economic inputs, sustains over 6.2 million jobs, and generates 2.6% of GDP (Mold, 2020). The bans on travel affect foreign carriers such as African behemoths Ethiopian carriers Egypt Air and Kenya Airways, as well as South African Airways, all of which play critical roles in attracting visitors to Botswana. Southern African nations rely extensively on commerce as a significant source of economic development, accounting for an average of 53% of GDP in 2018. With the exception of South Africa, nations in the region are particularly sensitive to outside fluctuations due to the region's limited local markets and low degree of diversifying. For example, 33 of the world's 47 LDCs are located in Africa and have been severely harmed as a result of commerce-restrictive policies implemented by several nations throughout the world. The negative consequences have varied from a slowing of economic development to jobs and manufacturing damage, as well as bankruptcy. Given that Southern African nations mainly export natural resources as well as raw commodities, the impending concern is disruption in supply chains because of a decrease in demand in the international marketplace for their goods that are exported.

The international recession will result in lower export revenues for Southern African exporters. Southern African nations, like the bulk of Africa's LDCs, rely substantially on inputs from more sophisticated nations. For instance, African enterprises import over sixty five percent of their production and distribution machinery from commerce partners located far removed from Africa; the majority of significant suppliers are located in Europe (35%), China (16%), and India (14%), respectively (Hagos, 2023).

Table 3: Production and distribution machinery importation

Location	Percentage
Europe	35%
Chine	16%
India	14%
Total	65%

As a result, Covid-19-induced problems with supply chains, mainly in China and Europe, have reduced the availability of trading in intermediate and transition commodities. Exports of medical and pharmaceutical goods have suffered some of the most severe

consequences. Makokera and Makokera (2020) observes that the present export restrictions on medical goods imposed by the EU, the US, and India are harming the healthcare sector in African countries that rely significantly on imports.

Table 4: Statistics on Medical supplies importation

Countries	Percentage
European Union	51.5%
India	19.3%
Switzerland	7.7%
China	5.2%
United States	4.3%
United Kingdom	3.3%
Total	91.3%

Based on statistics, Africa imports roughly 91.3% of its medical supplies from countries other than the continent, including the European Union (51.5%), India (19.3%), Switzerland (7.7%), China (5.2%), the United States (4.3%), as well as the United Kingdom (3.3%) (Mataba and Ismail, 2021b). This halt in importing has an additional influence on the availability of Covid-related goods like oxygen, peroxide from hydrogen, chemicals for disinfection protective clothing, and surgical equipment, among many others. Surprisingly, an externally disruptive approach appears to expose Southern Africa to major health and economic risks. Southern Africa has several trading relationships, with the EU and China being the most important. According to the African Union (2020), lower economic expansion in these regions has affected the demand for Botswana's both imported and exported goods (especially transformational goods). Southern Africa, becoming the most industrialised region within Africa, has been badly impacted as companies throughout the world shut down and manufacturers (e.g., car industry), mining, and other commodities supply chains are disrupted. Companies in more vulnerable industries may close in order to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to both employees and consumers. Some noteworthy instances are tourism, transportation, shopping, and restaurants. Furthermore, being a supplier of a variety of commodities abroad (primarily mineral supplies), Southern Africa has been impacted in a variety of manner. A rush to secure goods, for instance, will assist Southern African nations that export the precious metal (Makokera and Makokera, 2020). Due to a lack of updated data, the complete effects and expenses of border closures are not yet unknown. The bulk of border restrictions have been imposed with little knowledge of what is happening at ground level, and there is currently no regional or international collaboration. The World Health Organisation 'WHO' (2020) has repeatedly raised concerns about crossing border restrictions because they may end up in the casual transportation of individuals and products to unidentified places that are not tracked, boosting the likelihood of Covid-19 propagation. Southern Africa 's economic woes have been exacerbated by a shortage of standardisation of border closures, limitations on travel, and health implications.

Conclusions

Putting every detail into perspective, the Southern African economy represents a segment of the African continent's industries that holds a lot of potential. The main objective of this study was to determine how the Covid-19 pandemic influenced international commerce in Southern Africa. To expand and propel its economy ahead, the region has relied on foreign commerce, particularly the selling of natural resources, and the achievement of the tourist sector. However, because of a shortage of specialisation in its economy, the region has been heavily struck by the negative consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has drastically reduced foreign commerce. While the region's individual governments are putting mechanisms in place to cushion the shock, it is uncertain exactly what the effects of Covid-19 will be on Southern Africa's foreign commerce and, as a result, its economic development. At the moment, the existence of the pandemic has significantly disrupted Southern Africa's foreign commerce and caused individual countries to devise various coping techniques. Furthermore, nations must guarantee that, whenever the time arrives, they will promptly recover their international commerce capabilities to levels preceding the pandemic.

The future Direction of international commerce in Southern Africa

Future direction concerning Southern Africa 's post-Covid-19 status, it has been stated that there is a generalised chance of more strain on individual nations' economies. Increasing levels of unemployment are seen as significant factors driving people into unregulated industries and unofficial cross-border trading. A greater number of individuals are going to become unemployed as a result of coronavirus-induced actions, shifting to the illegal sector, perhaps displacing workers in more regulated jobs. Southern Africa's growth and economic expansion would most certainly slow in the coming years. It needs to be highlighted that developments in the mining industry are essential to Southern Africa 's financial future, with attention given to the industry's significant effect on exports of goods, government income, and GDP. Worldwide travel restrictions will have a significant impact on mineral trade until the virus is completely suppressed. As a result, significant financial losses are predicted from resource revenues. Particularly, foreigner-oriented industries such as tourism as well as hospitality, as mentioned previously, may suffer a substantial effect as travel prohibitions and growing anxiety about the virus drive tourists away. Restriction policies would significantly erode service exports, particularly those related to tourism (travel accounts for more than half of the total number of service exports).

Acknowledgement

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Collection; Formal Analysis, Writing—Original Draft Preparation, Writing—Review And Editing by authors with equal participation. All authors have read and agreed to the published the final version of the manuscript.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Ethical review and approval were waived for this study, due to that the research does not deal with vulnerable groups or sensitive issues.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Abrego, M. L., De Zamaroczy, M. M., Gursoy, T., Nicholls, G. P., Perez-Saiz, H., & Rosas, J.-N. (2020). The African Continental Free Trade Area: Potential economic impact and challenges. *International Monetary Fund*, 32, 35-39.
- Agarwal, P., & Chonzi, M. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on international trade: Lessons for African LDCs. Available at SSRN, 36, 93-94.
- Aliamutu, K. F. & Mkhize, M. (2024a). Awareness of Unpredictability in Economic Policy, Fiscal Decentralisation, and Innovative Approaches for the Preservation of The Environment in South Africa. *International Journal of Environmental, Sustainability, and Social Science*, 5, 91-105.
- Aliamutu, K. F. & Mkhize, M. (2024b). Inventiveness as a Driver of Small and Medium-Sized Business Profitability in South Africa: A Quantile Regression Method. *International Journal of Environmental, Sustainability, and Social Science*, 5, 239-252.
- Aliamutu, K. F. & Mkhize, M. V. (2024c). The Influence of Social Responsibility on Profitability in the Southern African Banking Industry. *Journal of Accounting Research, Organization and Economics*, 7, 111-129.
- Ajambo, E., & Emebinah, C. (2021). The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Maximizing benefits for the continent. *Harvard Africa Policy Journal*, 75, 23-29.
- Amadichukwu, P. (2021). Unpacking the significance of African Continental Free Trade Area for Africa and its people. 56, 66-69.
- Asante Antwi, H., Zhou, L., Xu, X., & Mustafa, T. (n.d.). Beyond COVID-19 pandemic: An integrative review of global health crisis influencing the evolution and practice of corporate social responsibility. 75, 45-49.
- Asiedu, E. (2021). The COVID-19 pandemic and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Exploring potential impacts and developmental implications. In *Global Trade in the Emerging Business Environment* (pp. 56-59). IntechOpen.
- Banga, K., Keane, J., Mendez-Parra, M., Pettinotti, L., & Sommer, L. (2020). Africa trade and COVID-19: The supply chain dimension. *ODI Working Paper*, 52, 31-33.
- Byiers, B. (2023). Regional integration and trade. 46, 34-39.
- Draper, P., Edjigu, H., & Freytag, A. (2018). Analysing intra-African trade. *World Economics*, 19, 55-74.
- Fischer, S. E., Vitale, L., Agutu, A. L., & Kavanagh, M. M. (2023). Intellectual property and the politics of public good in COVID-19: Framing law, institutions, and ideas during TRIPS Waiver negotiations at the WTO. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 109, 102-106.
- Fubah, C. N., & Moos, M. (2022). Exploring COVID-19 challenges and coping mechanisms for SMEs in the South African entrepreneurial ecosystem. *Sustainability*, 14, 19-24.
- Gamede, N. W. (2022). The effects of COVID-19 lockdowns on income distribution in South Africa: A literature review perspective. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, 11, 104-124.
- Giddy, J. K., & Rogerson, J. M. (2021). Nature-based tourism enterprise adaptive responses to COVID-19 in South Africa. *GeoJournal of Tourism & Geosites*, 36, 48-53.
- Hagos, B. A. (2023). The African continental free trade area: The road ahead for the continent's bold integration project. *Journal of International Trade Law and Policy*, 56, 68-72.
- Hollington, M. (2021). The AfCFTA and the promise of intra-continental trade in Africa. *The Thinker*, 88, 47-59.
- Ikwegbue, P. C., Enaifoghe, A. O., Maduku, H., & Agwuna, L. U. (2021). The challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and South Africa's response. *African Renaissance*, 18, 271-275.
- Jain, S. K. (2020). Impact on international trade during COVID-19 pandemic: A case study of India. *Developing Economies*, 44, 15-19.
- Kassa, M. D., & Grace, J. M. (2020). Race against death or starvation? COVID-19 and its impact on African populations. *Public Health Reviews*, 41, 1-17.
- Kassa, W., Edjigu, H. T., & Zeufack, A. G. (2022). The promise and challenge of the African continental free trade area. In *Africa in the New Trade Environment: Market Access in Troubled Times* (pp. 86-92).
- Kouam, H., & Sundjo, F. (2022). Trade liberalization and economic development: Lessons for Africa. 76, 96-99.
- Kouletakis, J., Lawal-Arowolo, A., & Itanyi, N. (2023). Copyright law protection of films in Nigeria (Nollywood) and South Africa (Sollywood): Pre and post-COVID-19 pandemic. *The Journal of World Intellectual Property*, 72, 33-39.
- Lekgau, R. J., & Tichaw, T. M. (2021). MICE tourism policy and strategy responses in managing the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10, 1997-2012.
- Luke, D. (2023). 8. Conclusion: It's in the world's interest to give Africa a new trade deal. *TRADES*, 209, 45-50.
- Luke, D., & MacLeod, J. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on trade in Africa. *Africa at LSE*, 56, 35-39.

- Lungo, L. (2019). The African Continental Free Trade Area: The role of EU support for Africa's historic trade agreement. 35, 66.
- MacLeod, J., & Guepie, G. (2023). How the COVID-19 crisis affected formal trade. 75, 56-58.
- Magezi, V. (2022). Corrigendum: Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on church ministries in Africa: A literature analysis focusing on South Africa. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 78, 19-23.
- Magwape, M. (2023). SACU and trade facilitation: A post-COVID pandemic legal analysis for improved efficiency. *Global Trade and Customs Journal*, 18, 23-29.
- Makokera, C. G., & Makokera, M.-B. (2020). South Africa's trade policy post COVID-19. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 27, 561-571.
- Masiya, T., Mandiyani, D., Molosiwa, D., & Mazenda, A. (2021). Southern African responses to the COVID-19 pandemic: A study of Botswana and South Africa. 66, 102-109.
- Mataba, K., & Ismail, F. (2021a). COVID-19 and trade facilitation in Southern Africa. 65, 202-209.
- Mataba, K., & Ismail, F. (2021b). COVID-19 and trade facilitation in Southern Africa: Implications for the AfCFTA. *WIDER Working Paper*, 56, 98-105.
- Mogendi, J., Nganga, T. K., & Osoro, K. (2022). Effects of Covid-19 on international trade and post recovery strategies in Kenya. *Journal*, 59, 68-72.
- Mold, A. (2020). The countdown to implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area in East Africa. *Journal*, 46, 55-59.
- Mold, A., & Mveyange, A. (2020). The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on trade: Recent evidence from East Africa. *Journal*, 33, 86.
- Mustafa, O. A. O. (2023). The economic impact of the coronavirus [COVID-19] pandemic on Sudan's foreign trade. *Journal of World Economy*, 2, 7-19.
- Mutizwa, B. (2020). COVID-19 a global nightmare: Revamping the Zimbabwean Health Sector (ZHS) for future epidemic and pandemic management. *Journal of African Problems & Solutions (JAPS)*, 2, 59-73.
- Obayelu, A. E., Edewor, S. E., & Ogbe, A. O. (2021). Trade effects, policy responses, and opportunities of COVID-19 outbreak in Africa. *Journal of Chinese Economic and Foreign Trade Studies*, 14, 44-59.
- Olaniyan, O. (2021). The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in the post COVID-19 era. *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, 63, 105-109.
- Onafowokan, A. O., Osoata, J., & Oni, B. (2021). Impacts of COVID-19 on Migration and Intra-African Trade. *African Journal of Sustainable Development*, 11, 149-160.
- Opute, A., Iwu, C., Adeola, O., Mugobo, V., Okeke-Uzodike, O., Fagbola, O., & Jaiyeoba, O. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic and implications for businesses: Innovative retail marketing viewpoint. *The Retail and Marketing Review*, 16, 85-100.
- Oulmane, N., Jallab, M. S., & Zidouemba, P. R. (2020a). The African Continental Free Trade Area and measures to facilitate trade could significantly mitigate COVID-19's economic impact in Africa. *Journal*, 122, 56-59.
- Oulmane, N., Sadni Jallab, M., & Zidouemba, P. (2020b). The African Continental Free Trade Area in a Covid-19 time: Macroeconomic and sectoral impacts. *Journal*, 850, 125-129.
- Panda, P. (2022). COVID-19, Trade Disruptions, and Gender: A survey of the potential interactions and consequences for economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of African Development*, 23, 347-374.
- Parshotam, A. (2018). Can the African Continental Free Trade Area offer a new beginning for trade in Africa? *Journal*, 985, 586.
- Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2020). COVID-19 tourism impacts in South Africa: Government and industry responses. *Geo Journal of Tourism and Geosites*, 31, 1083-1091.
- Shinyekwa, I., Kumeka, T., Adedeji, A., & Adeniyi, O. (2021). Effects of COVID-19 on trade, industrialization, and globalization in Africa. *African Journal of Sustainable Development*, 11, 162-186.
- Siamabele, B. (2021). Pandemics and cross-border trade. *About The Afsol Journal*, 7.
- Sign, L., & Van Der Ven, C. (2020). How the AfCFTA will improve access to essential products and bolster Africa's resilience to respond to future pandemics. 95, 108-110.
- Songwe, V., MacLeod, J. A., & Karingi, S. (2021). The African continental free trade area: A historical moment for development in Africa. *Journal of African Trade*, 8, 3-9.
- Taher, M. A. I. M. (2021). Coronavirus impact on international trade in South Asian countries' economies (A case study of Afghanistan). *Oriental Renaissance: Innovative, Educational, Natural and Social Sciences*, 1, 320-325.
- Tröster, B., & Janechová, E. (2021). The long journey towards Pan-African integration: The African Continental Free Trade Area and its challenges. *ÖFSE Briefing Paper*, 58, 65-98.
- Zgovu, E. K. (2021). East African Community regional trade policy amidst the COVID-19 crisis. 56, 58-65.
- Zindi, B., & Shava, E. (2022). COVID-19 and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation) in South Africa. *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation*, 3, 10-15.

