

# ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



**ISRG PUBLISHERS**

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

**ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)**

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – IV Issue - II (March – April) 2026

Frequency: Bimonthly



## Bridging Global Innovation with Supply chain with African Needs

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| **Received:** 09.03.2026 | **Accepted:** 12.03.2026 | **Published:** 17.03.2026

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### Abstract

*The global supply chain landscape is undergoing profound transformation driven by advancement in digital technology, sustainability imperative and changing geopolitical dynamic while these innovations are revolutionizing production and distribution systems worldwide, their impact remain uneven across regions – particularly in Africa. This research investigates how can be effectively adapted and implemented to meet the specific developmental needs of African economies. Drawing on interdisciplinary frame works from supply chain management innovation diffusion and development studies, the study explores the potential for technologies such as block chain, artificial intelligence (AI) the internet of things (IOT) and sustainable logistics solutions to enhance efficiency, resilience, and inclusively in African supply chains through a combination of qualitative case studies, policy analysis and stakeholder interviews this research identifies the structure barriers, institutional limitation and opportunities of innovation localization. This study also adopt a qualitative, exploratory research design, integrating multiple case studies with thematic analysis to build contextual understanding and generate grounded insights. This study seeks to address the gap by integrating perspectives from innovation systems theory, supply chain strategy and African economic development. It builds on prior research, not only the barriers but also the enabling conditions – policy, partnerships, education and infrastructure that can support the localization and sustainability of supply chain innovation in African contexts.*

**Keywords:** Innovation, Global, Bridging, Sustainability, Localization, Supply chain, Africa, AI, IoT.

### 1.0 Introduction

The evolving landscape of Africa's global supply chain is being shaped by a convergence of disrupted technologies, shifting trade dynamics, and growing demands for sustainability and resilience (John et al., 2025). As these transformations unfold, they present both challenges and opportunities for emerging regions,

particularly Africa. A home to abundant natural resources, a rapidly growing population and expanding consumer markets remains under-integrated into global value chains (Magaji et al., 2022). This disconnect underscores the need to investigate how cutting-edge innovations in supply chain management can be

effectively aligned with Africa's developmental aspirations and structural realities.

This research examines bridging global innovation with the supply chain with African needs through the analytical lens of innovation diffusion, institutional capacity and infrastructure development. It explores how global technology advancement such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, internet of things and sustainable logistics, can be leveraged to address Africa's supply chain inefficiencies and developmental constraints. The study also interrogates the systematic barriers to the innovation supply chain. The study also interrogates the systemic barriers to innovation adoption in African contexts, including regulatory fragmentation, skill deficits, infrastructural gaps and limited access to finance. The central aim of this research is to critically assess the pathways through which global supply chain innovation can be localized to serve Africa's strategic economic priorities, including industrialization, regional integration, agricultural transformation and climates adaption. Through a multidisciplinary approach drawing from supply chain theory, development economic innovation systems and policy analysis the research seeks to generate evidence-based insights and recommendation for academics, policy makers and industrial practitioners.

### 1.1 Research Objective

The primary aim of this study is to explore how global innovations in supply chain management can be contextualized and applied to meet Africa's specific development needs. The objectives guiding this research are:

1. To assess the current state of supply chain infrastructure and innovation adoption across selected African regions.
2. To identify key global supply chain innovations with high relevance and transferability to African contexts.
3. To analyze the institutional, infrastructure and policy text enables and barrier to the localization of supply chain innovations in Africa.

### 1.2 Research Problem Statement

Despite rapid advancements in supply chain technologies and management practices globally, African economics remain marginally integrated into these emerging supply chain paradigms. The continent continues to grapple with persistent logistical inefficiencies, inadequate infrastructure regulatory bottlenecks and limited capacity of technology adoption. These challenges hinder Africa ability to fully leverage innovations that are reshaping global trade and production systems. The core research problem addressed in this study is the disconnect between global supply chain innovation and the contextual realities of African markets. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how global supply chain innovations be effectively adapted and scaled to meet the economic, infrastructural and development needs of African countries. This problem is situated within the broader question of economic inclusion, technological transfer and sustainable development, to identify strategic interventions that bridge global innovation flows with localized application and impact.

The global business landscape has been reshaped by rapid technological innovation, data-driven decision-making, and advanced supply-chain systems (Imam-Binuyo et al., 2026). For Africa, the evolving supply chain is not merely a logistical function but a critical engine for socio-economic development, industrialisation, and regional integration. However, Africa is faced

with persistent challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, fragmented distribution networks, limited technological adoption, and inconsistent policy frameworks (Oluwalosijibomi et al., 2026). These constraints grossly impede efficiency, increase operational costs, and reduce competitiveness in the global markets.

Influenced by the severe supply-chain inefficiencies on one hand and rapid technological innovation on the other, creates an urgent need to bridge innovation with supply-chain development. Bridging these two domains is essential not only for improving logistics performance but also to broaden developmental needs, which include food security, healthcare delivery, industrial productivity, and intra-African trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) initiative. Aligning innovation with supply-chain therefore presents a major opportunity for Africa to stimulate inclusive growth, enhance resilience, and further reposition Africa more strategically within the global value chains.

Furthermore, bridging the global supply chain innovation in Africa requires leveraging on digital technologies like AI, IoT and blockchain to improve efficiency, transparency, and access to finance, while also focusing on building local capacity and infrastructure. The key strategies include enhancing regional integration to create more resilient supply chains, using digital platforms to connect small businesses to larger markets, funding, and building the workforce to adopt new technologies. The goal is to move from raw material export to value-added manufacturing and to become a more integrated and influential player in global trade.

## 2.0 Literature Review and theoretical Framework

This work intends to explore existing literature on innovation and supply-chain transformation within the African context. It examines the current state of supply-chain systems across Africa, the role of technological innovation in addressing persistent logistical challenges, sector-specific applications of innovation, and emerging trends in supply-chain digitalization. It also highlights structural barriers limiting innovation adoption and identifies key research gaps. The objective of this work is therefore to establish the theoretical and empirical foundations that justify the need to bridge innovation with Africa's supply-chain systems and illuminate the pathways necessary to meet the continent's socio-economic needs.

The study of global supply chains has expanded significantly in recent decades, evolving from a focus on cost efficiency and globalization to a more complex analysis of resilience, technological innovation, and sustainability. Scholars such as Christopher (2016) and Chopra & Sodhi (2014) have emphasized the growing importance of agility and digital integration in supply chain performance.

The use of AI, IoT, robotics and block chain has transformed supply chain visibility, decision-making and responsiveness (Ivanor et al, 2019). However, much of the literature remains concentrated on advance economies, with limited exploration of how innovation can be translated into a low-middle-income country context, particularly in Sub-Saharan African.

According to Godsent Ndoma (2025), innovation has long been recognized as a key driver of development and prosperity in societies around the world. However, Africa continues to face significant innovation gaps, limiting its ability to fully realize and

integrate its potential in addressing critical societal challenges. From inadequate infrastructure to limited access to funding and technical expertise, these gaps stifle growth, hinder progress, and perpetuate reliance on external solutions. He opined that Africa is home to over 1.4 billion people, a young and vibrant population, and a wealth of natural resources. Yet, despite these advantages, the continent accounts for less than 2% of global research output and innovation activities.

### 2.1 Overview of Supply Chain Systems in Africa

Damilola et al. (2022) are of the opinion that improvements in logistics performance is a significant driver of economic growth. They believe that digitalization in logistics, which includes enhanced tracking systems, digitized flows of information, artificial intelligence and automation, will further enabled globalized trade in Africa. African supply-chain environment is characterized by complex operational challenges, including outdated infrastructure, fragmented distribution networks, and regulatory inconsistencies. Most African countries experience high transportation costs, extended lead times, and inefficient cross-border trade processes that undermine competitiveness. The uneven development of road networks, limited connectivity between rural and urban markets, and congestion at ports further reduces supply-chain reliability.

Industry analyses such as Maersk Insights (2023) is of the opinion that Africa's supply chains suffer from limited real-time data visibility, inconsistent warehousing standards, and weak coordination mechanisms across stakeholders. These constraints cause Africa to lag behind in the global benchmarks of logistics performance and hinder the scalability of industrial and commercial activities. Modernizing supply chain is therefore imperative for economic growth, regional integration and Africa participation in bridging global innovation of supply chain management.

On the other hand, Africa presents unique challenges related to sustainable supply chain practices, including issues of poverty, infrastructure development, and natural resource management (Adam et al., 2019). The region also offers opportunities for sustainable practices, such as promoting local economic development, biodiversity conservation, and inclusive business models (Yang & Wang, 2020).

### 2.2 Reviewing Innovations in Supply Chains in Africa

This review aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the innovations in sustainable supply chains in Africa. By synthesizing the latest research and industry practices, the review seeks to identify the unique strategies, challenges, and opportunities for sustainable supply chain management. Understanding the innovations in sustainable supply chains in Africa is crucial for informed policy decisions, guiding industry practices, and promoting global collaboration towards Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainable supply chain practices in general encompass various dimensions, including environmental responsibility, ethical sourcing, and corporate social responsibility. In terms of environmental responsibility, the adoption of eco-friendly logistics strategies and the use of renewable energy in transportation and distribution networks are crucial (Min & Kim, 2012).

These practices align with the concept of sustainable supply chain management, which emphasizes the integration of environmentally friendly approaches into logistics and transportation operations

(Adeleke et al., 2019; Marshall et al., 2015). Furthermore, the incorporation of renewable energy sources in transportation networks is essential for reduction of carbon emissions and promoting environmental sustainability (Min & Kim, 2012).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives play a pivotal role in sustainable supply chain practices. These initiatives encompass efforts to address social and environmental impacts, as well as contributions to local communities and global sustainability goals (Marshall et al., 2015). Companies that tend to practice CSR supply chain management behaviors potentially increase their environmental performance, thereby contributing to the overall sustainability of their operations (Ezeigweneme et al., 2024; Antwi et al., 2020). In addition, the integration of sustainability into supplier development processes is crucial for expanding the focus of supply chain management to include environmental and social aspects (Ilugbusi et al., 2020; Hąbek & Czarnecka, 2021).

Fair trade practices are essential for ensuring fair compensation for producers and encouraging ethical business relationships. Chapman et al., (2003) examined Kenya as a case study in the sub-Saharan Africa, shedding light on the local fiscal stress in the region, which is crucial for understanding the challenges and opportunities for fair trade practices. Also, Marshall et al. (2015) emphasize that social sustainability supply chain practices are impacted by the culture of the organization, highlighting the significance of ethical business relationships in driving sustainable supply chain practices.

### 2.3 Leveraging on Innovations and Technologies

In the USA, advanced technologies such as the AI, Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain are revolutionizing supply chain management. The IoT is being applied to enable real-time product monitoring and management through wireless sensor networks, thereby enhancing supply chain revenue models (Abrahams et al., 2024; Cai et al., 2019). Also, blockchain technology is being utilized to ensure transparency and traceability in supply chains, particularly in industries such as power plants and agri-food, addressing issues of cheating and false data in safety production management and improving traceability in food supply chains (Liu, 2023; Feng et al., 2020). Furthermore, the development of eco-friendly packaging solutions is gaining traction, aiming to reduce environmental impact and promote sustainable practices within the region (Yadav et al., 2020). These localized innovations are essential for addressing the unique challenges faced by African industries, promoting economic development while minimizing environmental degradation.

Overall, these technological advancements and localized innovations are shaping the future of supply chain management, not only in the USA and Africa. They are driving improvements in efficiency, transparency, and sustainability, ultimately contributing to the advancement of global trade and economic development.

### 2.4 Innovation as a Driver of Supply Chain Transformation

Innovation has been identified as a transformational forces capable of addressing Africa's supply-chain inefficiencies. Technological advancements, ranging from digital platforms to advanced analytics, are increasingly being deployed to overcome historical structural challenges. Züfle (2024) opined that the integration of technologies such as IoT, blockchain, predictive analytics, and cloud-based systems significantly enhances decision-making, transparency, and coordination among supply-chain actors.

Empirical evidence from Mabika and Bhasela (2023) demonstrates that African manufacturing firms adopting innovative practices, such as automated procurement processes, digital inventory systems, and logistics optimization software, report improved operational performance and reduced costs. These findings highlight the innovation potential not only to improve efficiency but also to reshape supply-chain governance, accountability, and responsiveness across Africa.

### 2.5 Digitalization Trends and Emerging Opportunities

Digital transformation has accelerated rapidly in Africa in recent years, driven by increasing mobile penetration, fintech expansion, and availability of cloud technologies (Magaji et al., 2025; Adekunle et al., 2026). AISCR Global (2024) highlights that digitalisation enables more efficient logistics tracking, data-driven decision-making, and improved customer engagement.

Digital logistics solutions are enhancing transport coordination, inventory management, and e-commerce fulfillment in Africa by leveraging technologies such as AI, Internet of Things (IoT), and automation to improve efficiency, visibility, and responsiveness across the supply chain. Many African enterprises are now adopting digital supply-chain platforms that allow for automated ordering processing, real-time tracking, and improved logistics forecasting.

These developments present opportunities for African countries to leapfrog traditional, capital-intensive models of supply-chain management to adopting agile, technology-driven systems that enhance regional and global integration.

### 2.6 Barriers Limiting Innovation Adoption in Africa

Despite the promise of innovation, numerous constraints limit its integration into African supply chains. Infrastructure deficits remain a major challenge: unreliable electricity, weak internet connectivity, and poor road network slow down technology deployment in managing innovative supply chain. It is a common knowledge that these infrastructure gaps disproportionately affect rural and peri-urban regions, where supply-chain challenges are already more pronounced.

Digital literacy gaps among workers and managers further hinder adoption, while implementation costs remain prohibitively high for micro, small, and medium enterprises (Wube & Atwal, 2024). Access to financing, especially for digital logistics startups, is limited, constraining the scale-up of innovative solutions. Also, policy and regulatory inconsistencies across African borders create logistical bottlenecks and reduce the interoperability of supply-chain systems. These barriers suggest that innovation alone is insufficient; but supportive structures, financing mechanisms, and governance frameworks must accompany technological advancement.

### 2.7 Building Resilient and Future-Ready Supply Chains in Africa

Emerging literature stresses that Africa's supply-chain transformation must prioritize resilience and sustainability. In this regard, Cox et al. (2020) emphasize the need for robust supply networks capable of withstanding disruptions such as political instability, climate events, and economic shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities in African supply chains, which call for reinforcing the need for digital contingency systems and diversified sourcing strategies.

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

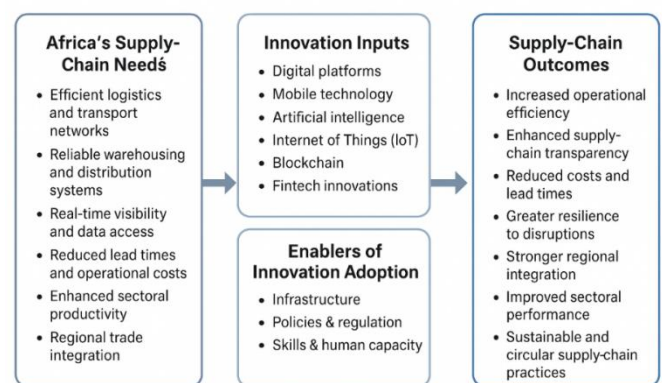
The paper presents a normative conceptual argument on bridging global innovation with supply chain with African needs (digital, platforms, blockchain, AI analytic advanced, logistics, circular design) contains potential to transform African supply chains.

The conceptual framework for this study integrates three major domains:

1. Africa's Supply-Chain Needs
2. Innovation Inputs and Enablers
3. Supply-Chain Outcomes (Efficiency, Resilience, Inclusiveness)

The model below proposes that innovation becomes effective only when the right enablers, that is, policy, infrastructure, skills, and financing bridges the gap between technological potential and practical supply-chain performance.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Fig. 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework. Source: Authors' Construction, 2026**

### 2.9 Key Concepts in the Framework

#### A. Africa's Supply-Chain Needs (Independent Variable Domain)

These include:

- i. Efficient logistics and transport networks
- ii. Reliable warehousing and distribution systems
- iii. Real-time visibility and data access
- iv. Reduced lead times and operational costs
- v. Enhanced sectoral productivity (e.g., agriculture, health, manufacturing)
- vi. Regional trade integration

### 2.10 Empirical Insights

This section presents the empirical insights that emerged from the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the study. These insights provide evidence-based understanding of how innovation interacts with Africa's supply-chain systems, the barriers affecting adoption, and the outcomes generated when innovation is effectively implemented.

The empirical findings reveal that key components of Africa's supply chain infrastructure, including transport systems, warehousing efficiency, cross-border trade processes, and real-time logistics visibility, remain below optimal levels. Also Africa's supply-chain baseline remains weak, calling for reinforcing the need for innovation as a strategic lever for improvement. Africa is

however adopting accessible, low-cost digital solutions but lagging in advanced technologies due to skill gaps, infrastructure weakness, and high investment requirements.

Innovation is not just theoretically beneficial, it empirically improves logistics efficiency, visibility, and cost structures across African supply chains. Hence Africa need to improve on its technological innovation to drive supply chain management to a global level. Innovation will not scale unless Africa addresses structural bottlenecks such as infrastructure, policy coherence, financing, and human capital development.

Policy and Institutional Weakness Slows Innovation Scaling. Qualitative inputs revealed that:

- i. Lack of harmonized digital trade policies
- ii. Slow regulatory approvals
- iii. Fragmented institutional frameworks

The above reduces the ability of innovations to scale across countries or sectors. Institutional and policy alignment is critical for continent-wide adoption of supply-chain innovations, especially under AfCFTA.

Taken together, the findings produce three major empirical conclusions:

1. Africa urgently needs innovation due to persistent supply-chain inefficiencies.
2. Innovation produces measurable, positive impacts on efficiency, transparency, and cost reduction.
3. Systemic enablers—policy, infrastructure, skills, financing—determine whether innovation succeeds or fails.

This empirical evidence supports the central thesis that bridging innovation with Africa's supply-chain needs requires a holistic, ecosystem-based approach rather than technology alone.

### Supply Chain Innovation in Africa: Case Study

#### Case selection criteria

Cases are purposively selected based on:

- i. Presence of a documented supply chain innovation (digital operational, or policy-driven)
- ii. Geographic diversity across Africa (East West, Southern and North African)
- iii. Sectorial relevance to key development goals (agriculture, health, manufacturing logistic)
- iv. Evidence of stakeholder collaboration (public-private partnerships, donor involvement or community engagement)

### Selected Sectoral Innovations and Their Impacts

#### Innovation in Agricultural Supply Chains

Innovation in the African agricultural supply chain is being driven by the adoption of digital technologies that help overcome long-standing challenges such as infrastructure deficits, market fragmentation, and limited access to finance. These innovations bridge critical gaps from farm to market, enhancing efficiency, transparency, and resilience.

Agriculture remains Africa's largest economic sector, and innovations in this area have had significant supply-chain implications. Mobile applications like *SELL HARVEST* in Nigeria

have improved information flow, market access, and coordination between farmers, traders, and transporters (Mudathir Salahudeen, 2024). These innovations reduce post-harvest losses, enhance price transparency, and promote more inclusive value chains for smallholder farmers.

Gikunda M.R. (2024) further emphasizes the role of artificial intelligence in forecasting demand, mapping logistics routes, and optimizing crop distribution networks. AI-driven tools enable real-time monitoring of agricultural activities, thereby strengthening resilience and improving supply-chain planning.

### Key Innovations in the Agricultural Supply Chain

#### 1. Digital Market Platforms (AgriTech Platforms)

Digital marketplaces are transforming how farmers, aggregators, and buyers interact. Platforms like Twiga Foods (Kenya), FarmCrowdy (Nigeria), and AgriBazaar (South Africa) directly link producers with consumers or processors, eliminating exploitative middlemen and ensuring fairer pricing.

#### Impact on Supply chain

- Improved market access and price transparency.
- Reduction in post-harvest losses through faster transactions.
- Data-driven matchmaking between supply and demand.

#### 2. Mobile Money and Digital Payment Systems

Financial innovation—especially mobile money (e.g., Opay in Nigeria)—has enabled seamless transactions in rural areas where banks are scarce. Also the mobile money platforms are integrated into agricultural cooperatives to facilitate input purchases and produce payments.

#### Impact on Supply chain

- Inclusion of smallholder farmers in the formal economy.
- Faster, more secure payments to farmers and suppliers.
- Enhanced transparency and traceability in payment records.

#### 3. Blockchain for Traceability and Transparency

Blockchain technology enhances trust across the supply chain by providing tamper-proof records of production, transportation, and sales. In Ghana, the AgroTrust Blockchain initiative tracks cocoa beans from farms to export, ensuring quality and compliance with international standards.

#### Impact on Supply chain

- Strengthened food safety through provenance tracking.
- Greater consumer trust in product authenticity (organic, fair-trade).
- Reduced corruption and fraud in procurement chains.

#### 4. Internet of Things (IoT) and Smart Farming Systems

IoT devices—such as soil sensors, GPS-enabled tractors, and automated irrigation, helping farmers make real-time decisions based on data. In Nigeria and South Africa, IoT-enabled cold-chain monitoring systems reduce spoilage during transportation of perishable crops.

### Impact on Supply chain

- Improved yield prediction and resource use (water, fertilizer).
- Reduced operational costs through automation.
- Enhanced monitoring of logistics (cold-chain, storage).

#### 5. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Analytics

AI-powered analytics optimize logistics planning, market forecasting, and production decisions. The Kenya's Hello Tractor uses AI and IoT to connect tractor owners with smallholder farmers in need of mechanized services, improving access and utilization.

### Impact on Supply chain

- Predictive insights for demand and price trends.
- Automated crop disease detection and yield estimation.
- Smarter logistics routing and risk management.

#### 6. Drones and Remote Sensing Technologies

Drones collect high-resolution imagery to monitor crop health, assess farm boundaries, and plan harvesting. The Rwandan drones from Zipline deliver seeds and agro-inputs to rural farmers, significantly cutting transportation time.

### Impact on Supply chain

- Reduced manual labor in crop surveillance.
- Accurate mapping for land use and irrigation planning.
- Early detection of pests, drought stress, and nutrient deficiencies.

#### 7. Cold Chain and Post-Harvest Innovations

Cold storage units, solar-powered refrigeration, and improved packaging extend the shelf life of agricultural products. ColdHubs in Nigeria provides solar-powered cold storage units for rural farmers, reducing tomato spoilage.

### Impact on Supply chain

- Reduction in post-harvest losses
- Improved export readiness for perishable goods.
- Better quality control in food logistics.

#### 8. Logistics and Supply-Chain Digitalization

Advanced logistics management systems, using GPS tracking, digital inventory tools, and route optimization, enhance efficiency. The Agribusiness Support Facility (AgriSF) in Ethiopia integrates transport optimization software to minimize waste and streamline deliveries.

### Impact on Supply chain

- Reduced fuel and transport costs.
- Better coordination between suppliers, distributors, and retailers.
- Real-time visibility across the value chain.

#### 9. E-Extension and Knowledge-Sharing Platforms

Digital advisory systems and mobile apps disseminate agricultural best practices and weather forecasts. Esoko (Ghana) provides

farmers with weather, price, and agronomic information via SMS, boosting yields and resilience.

### Impact on Supply chain

- Improved knowledge transfer and productivity.
- Reduced dependency on physical extension services.
- Enhanced decision-making for rural farmers.

#### 10. Green and Sustainable Innovation (Circular Economy Models)

Sustainability-oriented innovations such as biowaste recycling, eco-packaging, and renewable energy-powered systems are redefining the supply chain. The Wecyclers in Nigeria integrates waste collection with agri-input production (compost and biofertilizer), promoting circular value creation.

### Impact on Supply chain

- Reduced carbon footprint and energy costs.
- Increased long-term supply-chain resilience.
- Support for regenerative agriculture and local circular systems.

### Key Innovations in the Health Supply Chain

#### 1. Drones and Autonomous Delivery Systems

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones have become crucial for delivering medicines and vaccines to remote or hard-to-reach areas. Zipline operations in Rwanda and Ghana, delivering blood and vaccines. These innovations reduce delivery times, especially during emergencies and in areas with poor infrastructure.

#### 2. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning

AI and machine learning models improve supply chain efficiency by automating inventory management and optimizing procurement decisions. AI-assisted demand forecasting helps predict health commodity needs during outbreaks. Chatbots and AI-powered customer service support patients and health workers in tracking supplies and services.

#### 3. Advanced Cold Chain Technologies

To maintain the potency of temperature-sensitive products such as vaccines, innovative cold chain systems have been developed. Solar-powered refrigerators and passive cold boxes are now common in off-grid health facilities. Smart temperature loggers provide alerts to prevent product spoilage.

#### 4. 3D Printing in Healthcare Logistics

3D printing allows on-demand production of medical supplies, implants, and even prosthetics, reducing dependency on long-distance shipments. This technology enhances local manufacturing capacity and responsiveness to emergencies.

#### 5. Cloud-Based Collaboration and Supply Chain Integration

Cloud computing enables real-time data sharing between manufacturers, distributors, and healthcare providers. It supports integrated planning, reduces duplication, and enhances coordination among multiple stakeholders.

#### 6. Sustainable and Green Logistics

Sustainability is now a growing priority in the health supply chain. Eco-friendly packaging, electric vehicles, and carbon tracking systems help reduce environmental impact. Reverse logistics

allows for proper disposal or recycling of expired and unused medical products.

### Impact on Supply chain

- Improved visibility, transparency, and accountability across health systems.
- Enhanced responsiveness during health emergencies and pandemics.
- Reduced wastage and costs through accurate forecasting and digital tracking.
- Expanded access to healthcare in rural and underserved areas.

### 11. Key Innovation in Product Distribution and Networking (Dangote Group)

Dangote Group, a major Nigerian industrial conglomerate in regional supply chain in the manufacturing sector, has built vertically integrated supply chains in cement, agriculture, and refining. It's an example of private sector driven innovation in regional trade and logistics. Dangote's innovation supply chain with African needs include.

#### 1. Distributor and Retailer Network

- Dangote has a wide network of authorised distributors and retailers.
- Distributors and dealers buy from depots (or sometimes directly from plants) and then supply retailers or construction sites.

#### 2. Fuel (Refinery) Distribution – CNG Trucks Fleet

- Dangote is deploying CNG-powered trucks to distribute refined petroleum products across Nigeria.
- These trucks are meant to enable direct supply to marketers, large users (manufacturers, telecoms), and petrol dealers.
- The aim is to reduce logistics costs, improve fuel availability, and bypass traditional intermediaries.
- Dangote's refinery also uses marine transport to move products.

### Key Innovations

- i. Investment in cross-border infrastructure (ports, transport fleets, warehousing)
- ii. Integration of Enterprise Resource Planning.(ERP) systems and regional trade compliance tools
- iii. Alignment with AFCFTA (African continental free Trade Area) objective.

### Insights

- i. Highlights the role of regional grants in supply chain innovation
- ii. Shows how scale and investment can overcome fragmented infrastructure
- iii. Provides a model for African led industrial supply chain development.

## 3.0 Research Methodology

This section presents the methodology adopted for the study. It outlines the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, instruments, validity and reliability procedures, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and limitations. The purpose of this research is to ensure transparency, replicability, and scientific rigor in examining how innovation can be effectively bridged with supply-chain systems to address Africa's needs. The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory research design, integrating multiple case studies with thematic analysis to build contextual understanding and generate grounded insights.

### 3.1 Research Design

A multiple case study approach is employed to capture the diversity of African contexts in bridging innovation in supply chain management and the variability in innovation adoption across sectors and countries.

The study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design.

- The descriptive component enables a detailed assessment of the current state of supply-chain systems and innovation trends in Africa.
- The exploratory component allows investigation of emerging technologies, barriers, and conceptual relationships where limited prior research exists.

This mixed design is appropriate because the study seeks to analyze complex, interconnected variables—innovation, infrastructure, policy, and supply-chain outcomes—within a real-world African context.

### 3.2 Research Approach

A mixed-methods approach is employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative elements.

#### Quantitative approach

- Gather measurable data on supply-chain performance, innovation adoption, and organizational practices.
- Provide statistical support for identifying patterns and relationships.

#### Qualitative approach

- Capture expert opinions, institutional insights, and contextual realities across African supply-chain environments.
- Explore nuanced barriers and sector-specific innovation dynamics that numbers alone may not reveal.

This combination enhances the depth, validity, and interpretive power of the study.

### 3.3 Population of the Study

The population consists of stakeholders involved in supply-chain management and innovation across selected African countries. These include:

- Supply-chain managers and logistics professionals
- Technology firms and digital innovators
- MSMEs participating in agricultural, manufacturing, and health supply chains

This population is appropriate because these groups directly interact with or influence innovation and supply-chain performance in Africa.

### 3.4 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique is employed for the qualitative component to target experts and practitioners with direct knowledge of the subject.

A stratified random sampling technique is used for the quantitative component to ensure representation across:

- Sectors (agriculture, health, manufacturing, logistics)
- Firm sizes (MSMEs, large firms)
- Geographic regions (e.g., West, East, Southern Africa)

### 3.5 Sources of Data

#### Primary Data

- i. Semi-Structured interviews with key stakeholders including policy makers, logistics experts technology providers, and private sector supply chain managers.
- ii. Field visits and virtual observation of supply chain operations and digital innovation hubs in African.

Primary data provide first-hand insights into innovation adoption, supply-chain challenges, barriers, and opportunities.

#### Secondary Data

Drawn from:

- Academic journals and books
- Databases and digital platforms
- Policy documents, projects reports academic literature, industry publication and databases such as the world Bank LPI, UNCTAD and AfCFTA resources

Secondary data help support analysis, triangulation, and contextual framing.

### 3.6 Limitations of the Methodology

- Limited access to certain stakeholders restrict the depth of qualitative data.
- Variations across African regions limit full generalizability.
- Financial and time constraints reduce sample scope.

Despite these limitations, the methodology is robust and adequate for achieving the research objectives.

## 4.0 Result and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study and discusses their implications in relation to the existing literature. The results reflect data obtained from both quantitative survey responses and qualitative expert interviews. The discussion integrates these findings with theoretical perspectives and empirical studies to provide a robust interpretation of how innovation bridge Africa's supply-chain needs.

### 4.1 Results

#### 4.1.1 Supply-Chain Performance Indicators in Africa

The analysis indicates that Africa's supply-chain systems continue to operate below global standards.

#### Key Result:

Africa's logistics infrastructure and operational systems remain weak, fragmented, and costly. Structural and institutional challenges remain the biggest impediments to technological transformation in African supply chains.

The study revealed strong relationships between innovation adoption and supply-chain performance. Innovation has significantly improves supply-chain efficiency, visibility, coordination, and cost effectiveness.

### 4.2 Discussion

The study confirms earlier findings (Maersk, 2023) that Africa's logistics systems remain weak, with high operational costs and limited data visibility. Also findings justify the urgent need for digital transformation. The poor ratings on road networks, warehousing efficiency, and border procedures highlight the structural constraints that innovation must address.

This is consistent with Züfle (2024) and Wube & Atwal (2024), who reported that African firms adopt basic technologies but struggle with advanced supply-chain digitalization. Africa is digitally innovative but technologically uneven; scaling advanced innovation requires foundational changes in infrastructure and skills development.

The results show that the barriers to innovation adoption are structural—poor digital infrastructure, skill shortages, high costs, and weak regulatory support. These findings confirm Salient Advisory (2024) and AISCR Global (2024), who argue that infrastructure and policy inconsistencies remain Africa's biggest obstacles to supply-chain modernization. Innovation will not scale in Africa unless supported by coordinated investments, regulatory reforms, and capacity-building initiatives.

The strong correlation between innovation and supply-chain outcomes which demonstrates that technology significantly improves efficiency, visibility, and cost reduction. This reinforces studies by Mabika & Bhasela (2023), who found similar improvements in manufacturing and logistics when digital tools were adopted.

Moderate results on regional trade integration reflect challenges with cross-border digital coherence. Fragmented regulations and weak systems interoperability slow down regional logistics despite the promise of AfCFTA. This supports Cox et al. (2020), who emphasized that Africa's resilience and competitiveness depend on coordinated regional frameworks.

### 4.3 Summary of Discussion

The results demonstrate that while innovation significantly enhances supply-chain performance, its success is heavily dependent on the presence of supporting systems, particularly infrastructure, policy, financing, and human capacity.

Overall, the discussion confirms that:

- Innovation is both urgently needed and highly impactful.
- Africa's structural challenges slow the pace of innovation adoption.
- A systemic, ecosystem-driven model is required to align innovation with Africa's supply-chain needs.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

### 5.1 Conclusion

This work reviewed key literature on innovation and supply-chain systems in Africa. The evidence demonstrates that technological innovation has immense potential to address long-standing logistical bottlenecks and enhance operational efficiency across sectors. However, infrastructure challenges, policy inconsistencies, and financial constraints continue to limit widespread adoption. Bridging innovation with Africa's supply-chain needs will require coordinated investments, strategic policy reforms, and scalable digital solutions that align with the Africa's socio-economic realities.

Regulatory frameworks, infrastructure limitations, and capacity building are key areas of concern in achieving sustainable supply chains. While regulatory requirements can have a positive impact on sustainability reporting quality, challenges still exist, particularly for businesses in Africa. Overcoming infrastructure limitations and investing in capacity building are crucial for addressing the multifaceted challenges in sustainable supply chains.

In conclusion therefore, innovation presents a major opportunity for transforming Africa's supply-chain landscape, but its full potential will only be realized when systemic enablers (policy, infrastructure, skills, and financing) are effectively aligned. Strengthening these enablers will bridge the gap between technological potential and practical, continent-wide supply-chain improvement.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen Physical and Digital Infrastructure
2. Promote Adoption of Advanced Supply-Chain Technologies
3. Build Human Capacity and Digital Skills
4. Create Enabling Policy and Regulatory Frameworks
5. Improve Access to Financing for Innovation Adoption
6. Encourage Regional Integration through Digital Platforms
7. Support Sector-Specific Innovation Strategies
8. Foster Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP)

The above indicate that by bridging innovation with Africa's supply-chain needs through systemic reform, strategic investment, and collaborative frameworks, the continent can build resilient, efficient, and future-ready logistics systems capable of supporting inclusive growth and global competitiveness.

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