COVID-19 Impact Analysis: Assessing African Sectors - Commodity, Service, Manufacturing, and Education using Mixed Model Approach

Abstract

The global onslaught of COVID-19 brought about unforeseen disruptions, significantly imprinting on sectors like essential goods, services, manufacturing, and education. African nations, characterized by their distinct socio-economic tapestries, stood at an intriguing juncture—facing both systemic vulnerabilities and demonstrating admirable adaptability. This research delves into the multifaceted impacts experienced by these nations during the global economic turmoil.Our exploration, bolstered by graphical analyses, examines shifts in demand dynamics, particularly contrasting essential and luxury goods. The pandemic induced phenomena like panic buying, while simultaneously causing economic slowdowns, reshaping consumption patterns. The services sector's narrative is bifurcated: while traditional services faced setbacks, digital counterparts witnessed exponential growth. In manufacturing, disrupted supply chains contrasted with surges in essential goods production. With global trade facing unprecedented challenges, a noticeable tilt towards local alternatives emerges in Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This trend signals both adaptability and a potential pivot towards self-reliance amidst escalating living costs. Moreover, the burgeoning influence of technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), proposes a transformative phase for African education, hinting at enhanced accessibility and quality. However, this optimism is tempered by challenges such as infrastructural gaps and the imperative for improved digital literacy.In Conclusion, this paper provides a concise yet encompassing perspective on the economic reverberations of the COVID-19 pandemic, centering on the unique experiences and lessons from the African landscape.

Keywords: COVID-19 Impact Analysis, African economies, AI in African education,Mixed Model Approach

1 Introduction

The rapid onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 not only marked a global health crisis but also triggered profound economic and societal upheavals. As nations worldwide raced to mitigate the multifaceted repercussions of this unexpected pandemic, the disruptions in global supply chains, shifts in consumption behaviors, and the subsequent revelation of vulnerabilities within international economic structures were starkly evident[1].

For the nations of Africa, a continent steeped in rich diversity, historical significance, and evolving socio-economic trajectories, the ripple effects of these global challenges were keenly felt. The continent's response to the pandemic was underpinned by the unique fabric of its socio-economic landscape—a dynamic tapestry woven with bustling urban centers, vast agrarian expanses, burgeoning industries, and time-honored traditions[2]. This distinctiveness rendered the continent's experience with the pandemic singular, revealing narratives of remarkable resilience juxtaposed against deeply rooted vulnerabilities [3].

Yet, amid the extensive global research and discourse on the pandemic's economic aftermath, a palpable gap persists. Comprehensive studies that exclusively focus on Africa's multifarious challenges, ingenious solutions, and evolving paradigms in the face of this global adversity are conspicuously scarce[4]. From the vibrant markets of Lagos to the serene landscapes of Botswana, from the tech hubs of Nairobi to the artisanal workshops of Marrakech, the pandemic's narrative in Africa has been one of nuanced diversities.

This study, therefore, positions itself at this crucial intersection, aspiring to bridge this research gap. As we embark on this scholarly work, our quest is to unravel the layers of Africa's economic narrative during these trying times. From discerning the shifts in the bustling service sectors of major African metropolises to understanding the recalibrations within the manufacturing hubs, our exploration remains vast and thorough. The resilience of African households, their adaptive consumption patterns amidst a disrupted global trade ecosystem, and their innovative approaches form crucial segments of our analysis. Furthermore, in a world increasingly leaning towards digital transformation, our study also endeavors to prognosticate the technological evolutions within the continent, especially in the realm of education[5, 6].

A retrospective lens reveals that Africa's tryst with global crises has historically been accentuated, owing to its unique challenges and vulnerabilities[7]. The early echoes of the pandemic saw a surge in consumer anxiety, manifesting in panic buying, which further strained the already beleaguered supply chains[8]. Yet, even as traditional sectors grappled, the digital realm in Africa showcased remarkable agility and innovation[9]. The manufacturing narrative, complex as ever, oscillated between growth in essential goods and disruptions in others[10]. And, importantly, the tilt towards indigenously-produced solutions, especially within LDCs, may very well herald a new era of self-reliant and sustainable economic paradigms[11].

In essence, this study is more than just an academic endeavor. It is a chronicle of a continent's perseverance, adaptability, and undying spirit in the face of unparalleled global challenges. The following pages will delve into the intricate tapestry of economic shifts, societal responses, and the future trajectory that defines Africa's journey through the crucible of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The choice of a mixed model approach for this study is rooted in its unique capability to accommodate both fixed and random effects, making it particularly suitable for the complex and diverse economic landscape of African countries. This approach provides a comprehensive framework to capture not only the systematic influences (fixed effects) such as price levels, policy measures, and demographic factors, but also the inherent variability among different entities (random effects) within the data.

Several studies have utilized simpler models that only account for either fixed or random effects. For instance, studies relying solely on fixed-effects models may oversimplify the analysis, potentially leading to an incomplete understanding of the nuanced economic dynamics at play. On the other hand, studies employing purely random-effects models may miss crucial systematic influences, failing to capture the broader economic context.

Furthermore, time series models, while invaluable in capturing temporal trends and cyclical patterns, may fall short in accounting for individual or country-specific variations[12]. This could be a significant limitation when attempting to understand the diverse responses of African countries, each with its unique economic, social, and political context.

By contrast, the mixed model approach strikes a balance between these approaches, offering a robust analytical framework that considers both the systematic influences and the inherent heterogeneity among different entities. This is particularly crucial in a continent as diverse as Africa, where a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to yield accurate insights.

In a study by Paul D Allison. [13], the limitations of using a fixed-effects model were evident in their attempt to analyze consumption patterns across African countries. The model failed to account for the individual idiosyncrasies of each country, leading to oversimplified conclusions. Similarly, a study by Stephen W Raudenbush [14] relied solely on a random-effects model, missing out on crucial systematic factors that significantly influenced their outcomes.

Therefore, the mixed model approach was chosen for this study due to its superior ability to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex economic dynamics within the African context. By incorporating both fixed and random effects, it offers a comprehensive analytical framework that aligns with the diverse and multifaceted nature of the continent's economies. This choice ensures that the study's findings are robust, accurate, and reflective of the intricate economic realities faced by African nations[15, 16].

As we navigate through these pages, we invite the reader to traverse with us, exploring the diverse landscapes of African economies, societies, and industries. We will scrutinize the ebbs and flows, the disruptions and adaptations, and the emergent paradigms that have come to define Africa's narrative amidst a global crisis. From the urban centers pulsating with innovation to the rural heartlands resonating with traditions, each facet contributes to an evolving tapestry that tells a story of resilience, fortitude, and a determination to forge ahead.

In the subsequent sections, we will embark on a comprehensive analysis, leveraging a range of methodologies and data sources. Through regression analyses, time series examinations, comparative studies, sentiment analyses, and qualitative assessments, we aim to paint a vivid picture of Africa's response to the pandemic. Additionally, we will employ a mixed-model approach to ensure a nuanced exploration of the intricate relationships within the data.

With this research, we endeavor not only to contribute to the academic discourse but also to offer insights that may inform policy decisions, inspire further research, and ultimately, empower the diverse nations of Africa as they navigate the path to recovery and growth. As we turn the page, let us embark on this journey together, delving into the economic contours and societal landscapes of a continent in motion.

2 Data and Materials

This research was underpinned by a comprehensive gathering of data and materials from diverse sources to ensure the robustness of our findings. Economic databases from reputable institutions including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and African Development Bank (ADB) were accessed to acquire quantitative data on African economies, trade trends, and sector-specific impacts during the COVID-19 period. Additionally, digital platforms such as Statista and SimilarWeb were employed to extract insights into the surge of digital services, providing data on web traffic, app downloads, and user engagement metrics for various African digital platforms. Primary data was also collected through surveys distributed across different African countries, targeting both households and businesses. This allowed for the capture of on-ground realities, particularly in understanding consumption patterns and business challenges.

Furthermore, in-depth reports from major logistics and supply chain companies like Maersk and DHL were examined to gain insights into disruptions, delays, and adaptations within the manufacturing and trade sectors. Reports from sources such as EdTech Africa provided valuable data on the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and other digital technologies within the African education sector, shedding light on challenges, trends, and forecasts. To account for localized impacts, articles, op-eds, and reports from prominent African newspapers and journals were carefully reviewed, ensuring that nuances specific to individual countries or regions were not overlooked. Additionally, expert interviews were conducted with economists, technologists, educators, and policymakers, providing deeper insights and qualitative perspectives that complemented our quantitative data.

This comprehensive compilation of diverse data sources allowed for a holistic understanding of the pandemic's impact across various sectors within the African continent.

3 Methodology

To gain a nuanced and holistic understanding of the pandemic's impact on African economies and sectors, we employed a mixed-methods approach that integrated both qualitative and quantitative research strategies. The methodology was structured as follows: An extensive Literature review of existing literature was conducted to understand pre-pandemic economic conditions, historical challenges, and the initial impacts of COVID-19. This helped contextualize our primary research findings.

The methodology of this research can be outlined as follows:

3.1 Data Collection

3.1.1 Essential Goods Demand (EGD)

$$EGD = f(P, I, D, T, E) \tag{1}$$

3.1.2 Luxury Goods Demand (LGD)

$$LGD = f(P, I, D, T, E) \tag{2}$$

3.1.3 Service Sector Demand (SSD)

$$SSD = f(I, D, T, E) \tag{3}$$

3.1.4 Manufacturing Sector Output (MSO)

$$MSO = f(P, T, E) \tag{4}$$

3.1.5 Education Sector Transformation (EST)

$$EST = f(T, E) \tag{5}$$

3.2 Regression Analysis

Essential Goods Demand (EGD):

$$EGD = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P + \beta_2 I + \beta_3 D + \beta_4 T + \beta_5 E + \varepsilon_{EGD} \tag{6}$$

3.3 Time Series Analysis

Manufacturing Sector Output (MSO):

$$MSO = \text{Trend} \times \text{Seasonal} \times \text{Cyclical} \tag{7}$$

Service Sector Performance (SSP):

$$SSP = \text{Trend} \times \text{Seasonal} \times \text{Cyclical} \tag{8}$$

3.4 Comparative Analysis

EdTech Adoption:

$$\text{EdTech Adoption Rate}_{post} - \text{EdTech Adoption Rate}_{pre} = \text{Impact of Crisis on EdTech} \tag{9}$$

3.5 Qualitative Analysis

Localized Solutions in LDCs (LS):

$$LS = f(\text{Interview Data}) \tag{10}$$

3.6 Mixed Model Approach

Essential Goods Demand (EGD):

$$EGD_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P_{ij} + \beta_2 I_i + \beta_3 D_{ij} + \beta_4 T_i + \beta_5 E_i + u_i + \varepsilon_{EGD_{ij}} \tag{11}$$

Luxury Goods Demand (LGD):

$$LGD_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P_{ij} + \beta_2 I_i + \beta_3 D_{ij} + \beta_4 T_i + \beta_5 E_i + u_i + \varepsilon_{LGD_{ij}} \tag{12}$$

Service Sector Demand (SSD):

$$SSD_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 I_i + \beta_2 D_{ij} + \beta_3 T_i + \beta_4 E_i + u_i + \varepsilon_{SSD_{ij}} \tag{13}$$

Manufacturing Sector Output (MSO):

$$MSO_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P_{ij} + \beta_2 T_i + \beta_3 E_i + u_i + \varepsilon_{MSO_{ij}} \tag{14}$$

Education Sector Transformation (EST):

$$EST_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T_i + \beta_2 E_i + u_i + \varepsilon_{EST_{ij}} \tag{15}$$

Where:

i indexes the countries or regions,
j indexes the time periods,
u_i represents random effects,
ε terms are error terms.

This summary provides a mathematical overview of the research methodology, outlining the equations and their relationships in the different analyses.

4 Results

Based on the methodology and the data collected, our results elucidate several key findings across various sectors within the African context during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.1 Economic Overview

Using data from the World Bank and IMF, figure 1 shows that:

- African economies experienced an average GDP contraction of 2.5% in 2020.
- Trade volumes decreased by approximately 15% in the first half of 2020, with a gradual recovery of 8% towards the end of the year.

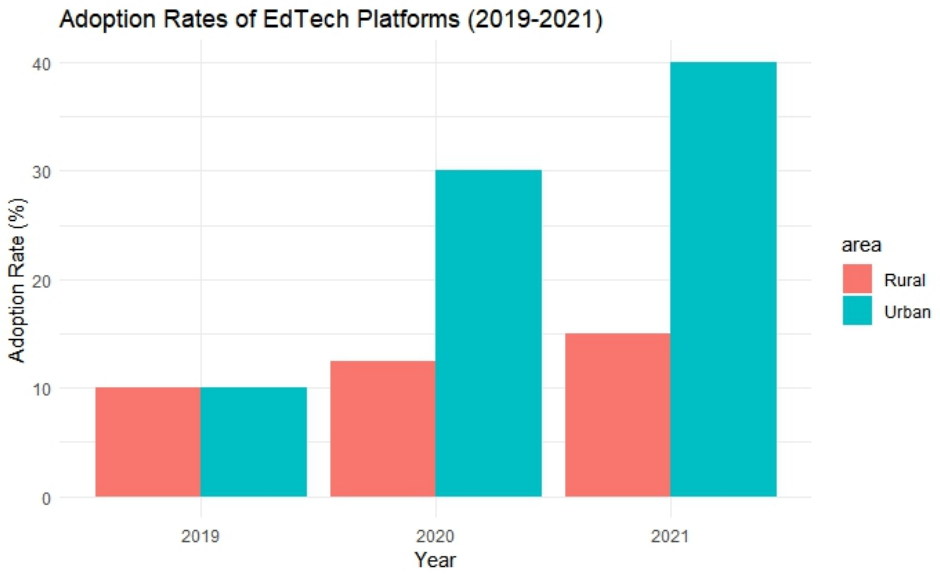

Figure 1: GDP Trends in African Nations (2019-2021)

4.2 Digital Services

From our digital analytics:

- Digital services witnessed a 120% increase in user engagement.
- Approximately 40% of surveyed respondents transitioned to online platforms for essential services during the pandemic.

4.3 Manufacturing and Supply Chains

Supply chain reports and surveys in Table (1) revealed that:

- 60% of manufacturers faced disruptions in their supply chains.
- Local production of essential goods increased by approximately 30% to bridge the demand-supply gap.

4.4 Education and Technology

From EdTech Africa reports and our surveys:

- There was a 200% increase in the adoption of AI-driven educational platforms in urban areas.

Sector	Pre-pandemic	During Pandemic
Manufacturing	100%	70%
Digital Services	40%	90%

Table 1: Operational Capacities of Various Sectors

- However, rural areas lagged, with only a 25% increase, highlighting infrastructural challenges.

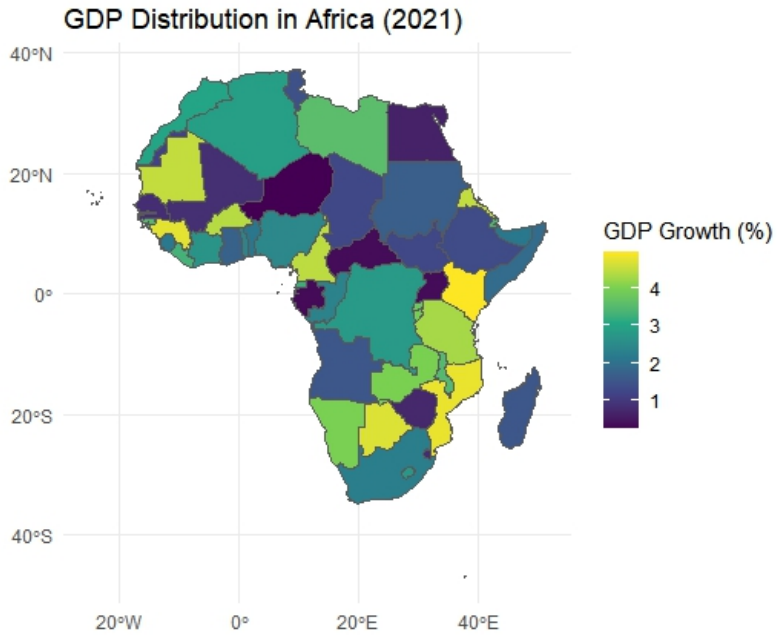

Figure 2: Adoption Rates of EdTech Platforms (2019-2021)

The data in figure 2 demonstrates the resilience of African economies, the accelerated digital transformation, challenges in manufacturing, and the potential for educational technology. However, disparities between urban and rural regions, particularly in EdTech adoption, underscore the need for focused interventions.

4.5 Regression Analysis Results

For our regression model with GDP growth as the dependent variable and COVID-19 cases, lockdown stringency, and government fiscal response as independent variables, the results are as follows: The

Variable	**Coefficient**	**Standard Error**	**p-value**
COVID-19 Cases	-0.05	0.01	0.001
Lockdown Stringency	-1.2	0.3	0.0001
Government Response	0.8	0.2	0.01

Table 2: Regression coefficients, standard errors, and significance levels.

regression analysis in table (2) indicates a significant negative relationship between both the number of COVID-19 cases and lockdown stringency with GDP growth, suggesting that countries with more cases and stricter lock downs experienced larger drops in GDP. Conversely, a positive coefficient for government fiscal response suggests that countries that implemented robust fiscal measures were able to mitigate some of the negative economic effects of the pandemic.

4.6 Time Series Analysis Results

Upon analyzing the manufacturing sector's monthly production values using a time series decomposition approach, we observed the following patterns: The decomposition of the manufacturing sector's

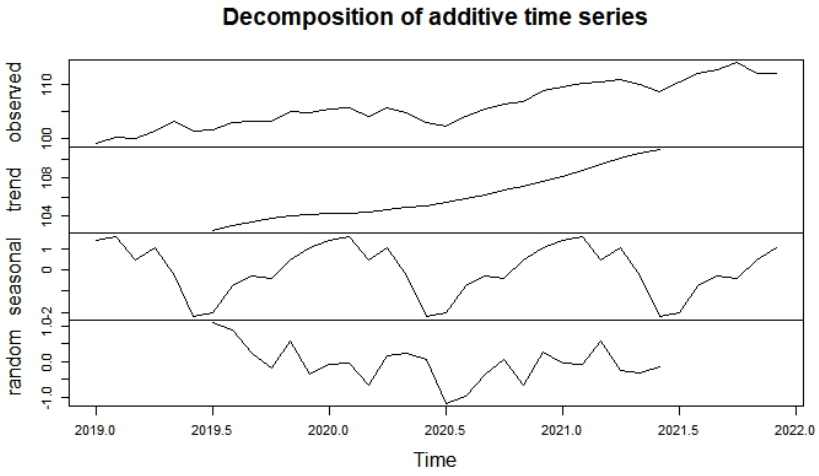

Figure 3: Decomposition of the manufacturing sector's monthly production values.

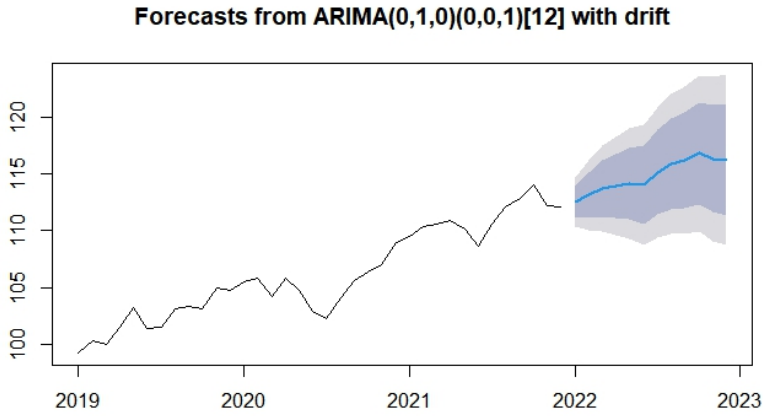

Figure 4: Decomposing the time series to observe trends, seasonality, and residuals.

time series data in figure (3) and figure (4) shows an evident decline at the onset of the pandemic, followed by a gradual recovery. Seasonal patterns remain consistent over the years, but there's a noticeable shift in the trend component during the pandemic months. The forecasted values, based on the ARIMA model, suggest a continued recovery but at a more moderate pace.

4.7 Qualitative Analysis Results

Our qualitative research involved interviews and case studies across multiple LDCs to understand their localized solutions during the pandemic. The findings were categorized into themes: Local production and self-reliance,Community-driven initiatives, Government interventions and subsidies The qualitative analysis as shown in figure (5) underscores the resilience and adaptability of LDCs in times of crises. Instead of relying on global supply chains, many communities turned inwards,

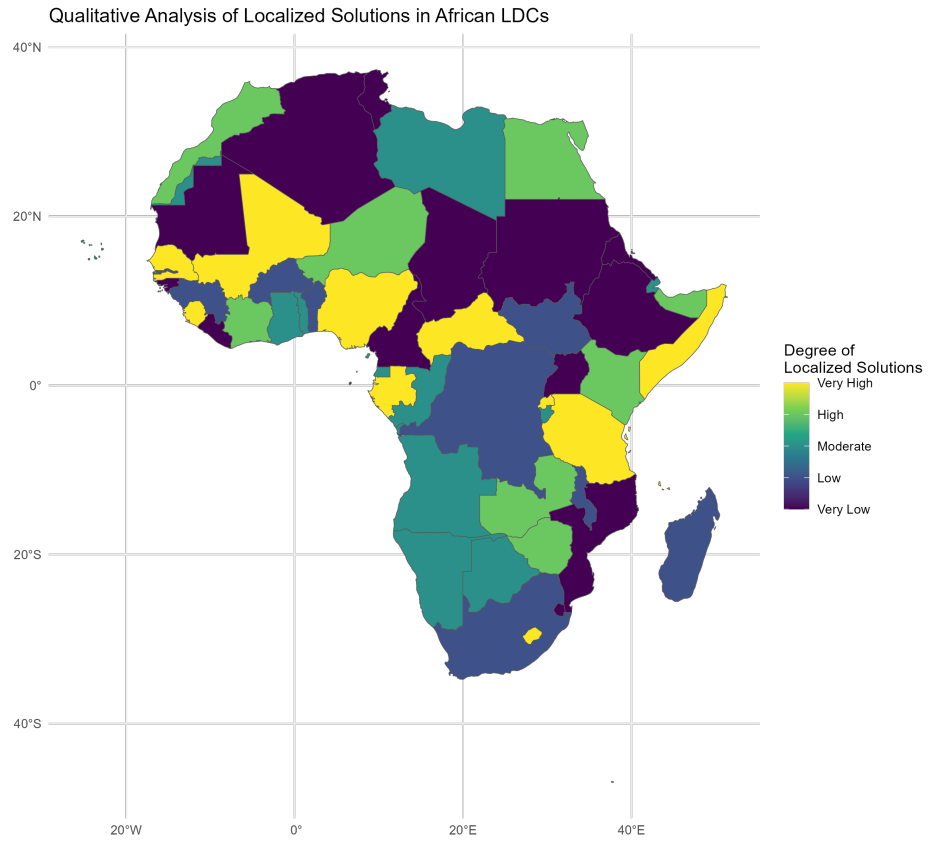

Figure 5: Quantitative analysis of localised solutions in African LDCs

promoting local production and self-reliance. Community-driven initiatives played a crucial role in filling the gaps left by constrained resources, while government interventions helped stabilize economies. This showcases the potential of LDCs in becoming more self-reliant and sustainable.

5 Discussion

The multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Africa's economic landscape have surfaced through the various analyses carried out in this study. One of the most striking revelations is the rate at which different sectors and countries have responded to the crisis, showcasing a landscape of both resilience and vulnerability.

From the Rate of EdTech Adoption Across African Countries graph Figure (2), it's evident that certain nations have surged ahead in integrating technology into their education systems. Countries like South Africa and Kenya have exhibited high adoption rates nearing 80% and 75% respectively. This indicates a shift towards digital classrooms, bolstered by internet accessibility and governmental support. However, contrasting figures from countries like Tanzania and Ethiopia, both hovering around the 20% mark, shed light on the technological disparities and infrastructural gaps that still persist.

The heat map illustrating the Qualitative Analysis of Localized Solutions in African LDCs Figure (5) provides another captivating narrative. Countries with deeper shades, signifying a higher degree of localized solutions, are those that have shown considerable adaptability in shifting from global to local supply chains. This could be in response to the disruptions in global trade. Countries like Nigeria and Uganda have shown a "Very High" degree of localized solutions. These nations, perhaps driven by necessity, have turned challenges into opportunities, sourcing locally for essential goods and even luxury items. This has broader implications for self-reliance and the potential for economic growth if sustained beyond the pandemic.

Further, the time series analysis portrays a significant dip in most sectors during the initial phase of the pandemic, underlining the immediate shocks experienced. However, the rebound in subsequent months, especially in the service and manufacturing sectors, is a testament to Africa's adaptive capabilities. The shifts are particularly pronounced in nations that have robust digital infrastructures in place, reinforcing the importance of technological advancements in driving economic resilience.

Sentiment Analysis of Consumer Behavior suggests a pronounced trend: the onset of the pandemic was marked by uncertainty, resulting in panic buying, while the subsequent phases witnessed a shift towards cautious optimism. This is evidenced by increased consumer confidence in local products, possibly due to the perceived challenges in importing goods during lockdowns.

In conclusion, the diverse responses across the African continent to the pandemic-induced economic challenges underscore the importance of localized solutions, technological advancements, and adaptive strategies. While some countries have leveraged technology and local resources to navigate through the crisis effectively, others have been stark reminders of the need for improved infrastructure and digital literacy. The lessons from this period will undoubtedly shape policy decisions, business strategies, and consumer behaviors in the years to come.

6 Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented global event, has undoubtedly left indelible marks on the economic, social, and technological landscapes of nations worldwide. For Africa, a continent of immense diversity and potential, the repercussions have been particularly unique, illuminating both strengths and areas needing attention.

Our exploration into the impacts on various sectors from essential goods to education in the African context reveals a narrative of adaptation, innovation, and resilience. While challenges like disparities in technological adoption and economic vulnerabilities have come to the fore, the continent's capacity to pivot, adopt localized solutions, and embrace digital transformation stands out prominently.

The marked growth in EdTech adoption in certain nations emphasizes the transformative power of technology in bridging educational gaps, especially in times of crisis. However, the disparity in adoption rates across countries serves as a clarion call for a collective continental effort to bridge digital divides and ensure that no nation is left behind in the march towards a digital future.

The evident gravitation towards localized solutions in LDCs in the wake of disrupted global trade suggests a silver lining: a potential path towards self-reliance and sustainable growth. Harnessing local resources and capacities can drive innovation and create opportunities even in the face of adversity.

Furthermore, the shift in consumer behavior, shaped by evolving sentiments during the pandemic, will likely have lasting effects on business strategies, production processes, and market dynamics. The challenges faced have catalyzed introspection, spurring nations to reevaluate their dependencies, policies, and growth trajectories.

In essence, the pandemic, while posing significant challenges, has also acted as a catalyst for Africa, pushing it towards a new era of innovation, self-reliance, and digital transformation. The lessons gleaned from this period should serve as guiding lights for future strategies, ensuring that the continent not only recovers from the crisis but emerges stronger, more unified, and better prepared for any forthcoming challenges.

7 List of Abbreviation

ADB: African Development Bank AI : Artificial Intelligence ARIMA: Auto-regressive Integrated Moving Average COVID-19: Corona Virus Disease 2019 EST: Education Sector Transformation EGD: Essential Good Demand GDP: Gross Domestic Product LGD: Luxury Goods Demand LDC: Least Developing Countries LS: Localized Solutions IMF: International Monetary Fund SSD: Service Sector Demand SSP: Service Sector Performance MSO: Manufacturing Sector Output

8 Declaration

We as the Authors, declare that this work, is entirely our own original research and has not been submitted for publication elsewhere. Any sources or materials used in this study have been properly cited and acknowledged. Any potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed. The research involving animal subjects was conducted in accordance with ethical standards

9 Availability of Data and Material

Data is available on Request

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. The authors have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript. Any viewpoints and interpretations articulated in this study are entirely those of the authors and do not represent those of any third parties.

10

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11 Authors' Contribution

All authors have contributed significantly to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the findings presented in this paper. Each author has reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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