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Contents

Tracks/Proceedings	Page Number/s
Conference Overview by the President	2
Track chairs.....	3
Business & Management.....	4-28
Law & Society.....	29-33
Economics, Finance & Accounting.....	34-41
Social Science and Development.....	42-47
Science & Engineering.....	48-57
AI and Data Science.....	58-60
The 2025 Conference.....	61
Partners/Sponsors.....	62

Conference Overview by the President

The inaugural Ghana Scholarly Society (GSS) Conference, held at the University of Bradford's School of Management from June 19th -20th, 2024, served as a platform for African academics, researchers, policymakers, and businesses worldwide to engage in policy-driven discussions aimed at fostering national development. The success of the conference was made possible through the collective efforts of GSS executives, keynote speakers, partners, and participants, whose contributions are deeply appreciated.

Establishing a Vision for Research-Driven Development

Since its establishment in 2021, the GSS has been committed to uniting Ghanaian academics globally to advance knowledge and inform policy development through research-based insights. The 2024 conference centred on multidisciplinary research addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offering policy recommendations to tackle pressing social and economic challenges in Ghana and the broader African context.

Shaping Policy through Evidence-Based Research

The conference highlighted the critical role of integrating academic research into policymaking to address Africa's socio-economic challenges effectively. The GSS is prepared to collaborate with African governments, the European Union, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other global partners to foster a research-driven policy environment. This collaborative approach aims to advance sustainable development, elevate living standards across Africa, and mitigate youth migration and brain drain which remains a persistent concern for global leaders.

Looking Ahead

Future GSS conferences will continue to explore key development themes. By embedding evidence-driven strategies into governance, African nations can build a robust foundation for sustainable development. Moving forward, all GSS standing conferences will be officially known as **The International Conference for African Development (iCAD)**. This reinforces the commitment of the Society to advance Africa-focused research and policy dialogue at the global level.

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Business & Management

Prospects, challenges, and the role of law in the use of chatbots in the banking industry

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Abstract

The banking industry has experienced significant changes with the advancement of technology, especially with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Chatbots are largely used by banks to revolutionize customer service. These days, a greater percentage of customer enquiries, requests, complaints and investment queries are handled by chatbots. This move has improved customer service in general immensely as it presents a wider coverage, responses in real time and around the clock. Despite these benefits, the use of chatbots also presents challenges such as compliance, privacy breaches, data security and liability. This research seeks to explore the prospects, the challenges and the role of law in the use of chatbot in the banking industry.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Chatbos, data security, banking industry

**The influence of German development
cooperation on foreign direct investment decisions of German investors**

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Abstract

This study critically examines the relationship between the neo-liberal economic precepts of development cooperation, overseas development assistance and foreign direct investment (FDI). Specifically, it explores how Germany's neo-liberal Marshall Plan with Africa influences the investment decisions of German companies. The analysis is based on in-depth semi-structured key informant interviews conducted with German companies, business associations and development cooperation institutions currently active in Côte d'Ivoire – one of the largest French-speaking countries in Africa. It introduces an analysis of the reputational and network effects of development cooperation on FDI. This study contributes to theory by demonstrating how the reputational and network effect of development cooperation provides a clear signal to the private sector through an improved image of the host country due to its reform partner status. The study also extends the fundamental theories of the official development aid-FDI nexus by showing that new forms of development cooperation can have a significant impact on FDI. It further contributes to the country image literature by suggesting that development cooperation should be included in a country's reputation frameworks – which is a key government policy for most emerging and economies seeking to attract FDI. Practical implications for public and private actors are discussed.

Keywords: German Development Cooperation, foreign direct investment, reputational effect, network effect, Africa, Cote d'Ivoire

**Fostering a culture of environmental
responsibility of green behavioural intentions on green supply chain practices: Evidence
from a developing country, Ghana.**

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Abstract

The realization of GSCM's full potential faces obstacles, highlighting a disconnect between theoretical concepts and practical implementation. To bridge this gap, companies require more than just the desire to adopt eco-friendly practices; they need a well-defined strategic framework that fosters a culture of environmental responsibility. The study specifically targeted individuals in significant managerial positions, including top-level managers, as well as key personnel holding pertinent roles such as supply chain managers, procurement or purchasing managers, logistics managers, and operations managers. A sample of 100 manufacturing firms located in the Greater Accra Region were used. The sample was drawn from a database compiled by the Ghana Chamber of Commerce and Industries. In this study, a purposive sampling technique was utilized to carefully select one respondent firm from the manufacturing companies located in the Greater Accra Region. The primary instrument for collecting data was a survey questionnaire, structured in a Likert scale format. Analysis of the collected data, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was chosen as the analytical framework. The study concludes that there is substantial evidence of the critical role played by green behaviour intentions and green organizational climate, as well as their interconnected dynamics, in shaping the adoption of green supply chain practices. These results enhance our understanding of these relationships and emphasize their significance within the realm of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Key words: Green supply chain management, structural equation modelling (SEM), sustainability and environmental responsibility.

**The influence of green human resource
management (GHRM) practices on organizational performance.**

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Abstract

Green HRM is defined as the use of HRM policies, philosophies, and practices to promote sustainable use of resources and prevent harm arising from environmental concerns within business organizations. There has been a rising academic interest in the role of HRM in environmental management issues. Despite the growing academic interest and the number of studies in this area, gaps still exist in the HRM literature on green HRM. Specifically, there is a dearth of research that provides insight processual dynamics that enable an explanation of the mechanisms by which green HRM influence the overall organizational performance in terms attracting employees. This current research takes work a step further to investigate how these green HRM policies being practiced by the organizations' HR departments translate into organizational performance in terms of attracting employees. This study therefore attempts to contribute to the advancement of our understanding of green HRM by developing a process model to explain how green HRM activities can lead to attracting employees.

Key words: Green HRM, sustainability, organizational performance

**Interplay of technology and
flexible working for gender-inclusive career
progression: Case of women academics in Ghana.**

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Abstract

This paper explores career progression for women academics in Ghana, a phenomenon Barrett and Barrett consider an equality issue. It explores how technology and flexible working as organisation support mechanisms can facilitate gender-inclusive career progression. Women academics participation in higher education institutions is copiously low in Ghana; and they continue to be underrepresented in higher echelon roles. The evidence internationally indicate that women professionals are clustered at the lower level of the career hierarchy and this is attributed to women's intersectional identities and organisation structures. Women conspicuously 'stick to the floor' or leak out from the pipeline to leadership roles (Etzkowitz et al., 2020) around the middle management level or stay longer at a level before being promoted (Burkinshaw, 2015). This situation is an aberration of the sustainable development goal number five which emphasise gender equality and women empowerment.

Key words: Equality, career progression, gender equality and women empowerment, flexible working.

Towards a sustainable brand loyalty: The roles of smartphones and social identity in online brand communities

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Introduction

The rise of the internet has led to the growth of online brand communities (OBCs). OBCs provide great opportunities for businesses to communicate brand values and exchange information with customers in an attempt to influence customers' purchasing behaviour and loyalty. OBCs have become an important marketing instrument. This study assesses the key roles smartphones and social identity theory play in OBCs and significant managerial implications for brand managers and marketers. From a social identity perspective, it is suggested that customers are by nature individuals who identify with certain social groups based on both the positive and negative values associated with these groups. This study identifies social identity theory as a key cognitive tool that can be used to underpin discussions about how people develop commitment to a group on the basis of social categorisation. In this study we use an online survey of members of OBCs to ascertain consumers' sense of social identity in OBCs and how that drives loyalty in the form of positive electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and resistance to negative information.

Key words: Sustainability, brand, loyalty, brand management, online brand communities, social identity, smartphones.

Advancing sustainability reporting quality in a sub-saharan African market: Does corporate governance matter?

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Abstract

The complex relationship between corporate governance and sustainability reporting quality has been extensively studied worldwide (Alsayegh et al., 2023; Al-Qudah and Houcine, 2024; Correa-Garcia et al., 2020; Gerwing et al., 2022; Githaiga and Kosgei, 2023; Gyimah et al., 2023; Jamil et al., 2021). Despite the substantial increase in studies on corporate governance and sustainability reporting quality, comprehensive investigations in developing countries remain scarce. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the relationships between board attributes, audit committee attributes, and sustainability reporting quality in the Ghanaian context, contributing valuable insights that can guide listed firms in aligning governance practices with environmental imperatives and advancing sustainable business practices.

Key words: Sustainability, reporting quality, corporate governance.

Navigating post-investment dynamics in equity crowdfunding: The role of emerging technologies and theoretical integration in enhancing investor trust

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Abstract

Equity crowdfunding has emerged as a transformative funding mechanism for Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) and startups, offering an alternative to traditional fundraising methods which often pose challenges due to information asymmetry and collateral requirements. This innovative approach allows entrepreneurs to list their ventures online for investors to purchase shares, thus democratizing the investment process. The growth of equity crowdfunding has been significant, contributing 15.6% to the UK's seed and venture-stage financing in 2015, up from 0.3% in 2011. Despite its success in the pre-investment phase, there remains a critical gap in addressing post-investment challenges, which threatens the sustainability and global scalability of this funding model.

Key words: Post-investment dynamics, equity crowdfunding, emerging technologies and investor trust

How do professional service firms (PSFs) organise and operate in the African market: A case study of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the operational strategies of professional service firms (Nordenflycht 2010) within the African markets, using Nigeria as a case study. This research seeks to understand PSFs function in a foreign country with a less established business environment. Given the unique opportunities and contextual differences in emerging markets, the study will also look at how they adapt their organisational structures and operations to meet local demands while balancing global best practices with their host communities. Using factors such as institutional context, institutional void (Liedon et al. 2020), and institutional logic, the study models a framework that explains how PSFs operate their subsidiaries in Nigeria despite the different institutional contexts, how PSFs organise and standardise their operations in a host country, what practices PSFs use to reduce and manage institutional logics and voids and how PSFs practices and operations impact Nigerian professional business fields in the post-colonial era (Boussebaa et al. 2012; Brock et al. 2014), and finally explores successful strategies used by prominent PSFs in Nigeria to overcome these challenges to succeed in a competitive market. The study will use case studies and semi-structured interviews to produce findings that will have both theoretical implications and practical significance. Additionally, the study will through the lens of institutional theory (Kostova et al. 2008) examine how PSFs adapt to diverse cultural, economic contexts and organisational behaviour. This contributes to the understanding of global business strategies. The findings will also provide insights for operating in Nigeria, offering strategic guidance for effective market entry and expansion. The study will further address challenges in culturally diverse environments and informs policymakers on potential refinements to regulatory frameworks. This research helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering valuable knowledge for academia, industry professionals, and policymakers dealing with the complex nature of professional services in the African market, particularly in Nigeria.

Key words: PSF, institutional void, institutional context, institutional logic, Nigeria.

Managing the wicked problem of waste management and recycling through stakeholder perspective: the interplay between rationality and irrationality

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Abstract

Wicked problems have been defined as “poorly formulated, boundary-spanning, ill-structured issues with numerous stakeholders who bring different perspectives to the definitions and potential resolutions of the issue or problem” (Waddock, Meszoely, Waddell, & Dentoni, 2015: 996). Wicked problems are characterized by complexity, uncertainty and value divergence among the affected stakeholders (Rittel & Webber, 1973). They are notoriously difficult to solve, and global wicked problems manifest themselves as “grand challenge” (George, et al., 2016: 1881). Wicked problems (WP) are often interwoven with Grand challenges (GC) which are persistent global problems such as climate change and poverty. GC is different WK in terms of their scope and their geographical breadth, GC when a problem has global reach, WK is has a local scope. Despite the increasing literature on environmental governance over the past two decades, the debate on what makes waste management and recycling (WM&R) wicked problem in some cities remains open. Building on the concepts of the wicked problem and stakeholder, we are studying why waste management and recycling (WM&R) fails to function at sufficient levels in Kinshasa, DRC asking the question why all efforts to manage solid waste management in Kinshasa have been unsuccessful. What makes a problem wicked? And why it is difficult to resolve wicked problems? What contributes to the wickedness of the problem?

Key words: Waste management, recycling, environmental governance and stakeholder perspective

Barriers to successful formal entrepreneurship: A case study of waste recycling enterprises in Kinshasa, DRC.

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is becoming a global phenomenon of utmost significance that leads to economic development and growth ([Barba-Sánchez and Atienza-Sahuquillo 2017](#); [Wennekers et al. 2005](#)); it occurs within the context of both formal and informal economy (see Thai and Turkina 2014; Webb and Ireland 2015; Williams et al. 2017; etc.). There is a body of work that has started to evaluate entrepreneurship venture performance by comparing the formal and informal enterprises (La Porta and Schleifer 2014; Williams et al., 2017). Given the strong connection of formal entrepreneurship to economic development, scholars are interested in identifying barriers to success formal entrepreneurship (Minniti 2008; Williams et al., 2017). This study sheds light on the question why many formal waste recycling enterprises in Kinshasa are unsuccessful, even though they do have access to formal credit and tax incentives. Using institutional theory lens, we study in the context of solid waste management and recycling (SWM) business in Kinshasa, asking the questions, why many formal recycling enterprises in Kinshasa are unsuccessful? How do obstacles to successful formal recycling entrepreneurship occur?

Key words: Formal entrepreneurship, waste recycling enterprises, economic development

Nine years of sustainable development goals research in Africa: A review and future research agenda

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Abstract

The progression towards achieving the seventeen (17) United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has attracted increased attention among policymakers and business scholars (Erin and Bamigboye, 2021; Gyimah et al., 2023). Contemporary scholars are calling for more research to be conducted in Africa due to the complexity and diversity of cultures, varied typologies of political and economic institutions that undergird the processes of political transformation and sustainable development (Aust et al., 2020). Thus, there is the need to conduct another study focusing on only Africa to understand better the trends, gaps, and future directions towards the achievement of the SDGs. This study uses a bibliometric and systematic literature review (SLR) to comprehensively explore the past nine year's scholarly business, management, and accounting research on the SDGs in Africa and provide future research agenda.

Key words: Sustainable development goals (SDGs), diversity of cultures and political transformation

Assessing the mediating role of consumer social responsibility between sustainable entrepreneurship education and green purchase behaviour among university students.

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Abstract:

The study examined the role of consumer social responsibility in the relationship between sustainable entrepreneurship education and green purchase behaviour among university students. The study was a survey, data were gathered by structured questionnaire. The study used university students of Akenten-Appiah Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED), Ghana. The sample includes 422 undergraduate university students from 10 programs at the faculty of business of the university. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. The study revealed that sustainable entrepreneurship education has significant positive influence on green purchase behaviour. Consumer social responsibility was found to mediate the relationship between sustainable entrepreneurship education and green purchase behaviour. Assessing the mediating role of consumer social responsibility between sustainable entrepreneurship education and green purchase behaviour represents novel contributions of this study.

Keywords: Sustainable entrepreneurship education, consumer social responsibility, green purchase behaviour and green purchase behaviour

Exploring the moderating role of organizational change between export promotion consumption and export performance

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Abstract

The focus of the intended research is that of export promotion, which is, activities that Export Promoting Organizations (EPO), typically government agencies but also industry associations, take to influence the start, sustenance, or growth of export sales (Catanzaro and Teyssier, 2020). Examples of export promotion activities include the provision of information on potential partners/clients, provision of information on foreign markets, training on exporting activities, provision of contacts of potential foreign partners/clients, consultancy, financing of international marketing activities, insuring of international trade operations, facilitation of experiential knowledge, awareness creation of export promotion activities, etc (Kahiya, 2023). EPO activities are typically designed to provide information, training, trade mobility, or financial aid (Leonidou et al., 2011) and are often provided through programs that are mostly referred to as export promotion programs (EPP), export promotion activities (EPA), export assistance programs (EAP), or export support programs (ESP) (Freixanet, 2022; Kahiya, 2023). Such programs may include trade missions, foreign offices, trade shows, and market information programs, offered individually or in bundles (Catanzaro and Teyssier, 2020).

Key words: Organizational, export promotion consumption and export performance

Internationalizing new ventures versus traditional internationalising firms brand development: Contingency approach

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Abstract

During foreign expansion, some firms follow the traditional internationalizer (TI) (Gabrielsson, Gabrielsson, Seppälä 2012) pattern, that is, the gradual or stepwise process (Johansson and Wiedersheim-Paul 1975; Johanson and Vahlne 1977; Luostarinen 1979), whereas others adopt an early and more rapid format referred to as international new ventures (INVs) (Oviatt and McDougall 1994). Strategies to support these internationalization ventures have been acknowledged as important (Jones and Coviello 2005). Numerous studies have been conducted into INVs strategies pertaining to marketing, finance, re-structuring-outward and inward activities among others, however, handful are identified with branding issues. Even it is subtly discussed in the context of marketing strategies (e.g. Freeman, Deligonul, and Cavusgil 2013). Branding has however been treated from strategic context by several authors (see Balakrishnan 2009; Keller 2001; Onkvisit and Shaw 1989). This study hence, argues that, branding in INV context is worth of an investigation on its own. Regarding gradual internationalization firms, studies on branding strategies have mostly concentrated on large established brands. This study stands to close this important void from the domain of born globals (BGs) (Knight and Cavusgil 2004) which is extreme form of INVs (Rialp, Rialp and Knight 2005; Kusi et al., 2022) and TIs perspective. Hereinafter, TIs and BGs will be referred to as internationalizing ventures (IVs).

Key words: Internationalizing new ventures, traditional internationalising firms, brand development, contingency theory.

Ignorance has no boarders: Unpacking the mentorship approach and process to African entrepreneurs.

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Abstract:

This report delves into the unique challenges faced by African entrepreneurs, examining the role of ignorance in hindering their success and advocating for a Mentorship Approach and Process (M.A.P) as a transformative tool. Rooted in a reflective journey spanning over four decades, this study aims to unpack the internal barriers impeding the entrepreneurial journey in Africa. Drawing insights from Fox (2009), Hawkins (2014), Maltz (1960), and Tracy (1989), this research underscores the importance of addressing ignorance as a universal challenge transcending geographical borders.

Key words: Ignorance, mentorship approach and African entrepreneurs.

I know; therefore, I am: Crafting the strategic identity of a hub organisation in an emerging innovation ecosystem.

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Abstract:

There have been increasing calls for a renewed strategic approach that involves a more focussed involvement of universities in driving the concerted effort that aim at deepening the innovativeness of their regional innovation ecosystems (Siegel and Wright, 2015). Inroads into such broader university-industry collaborations at the regional innovation ecosystem level require dedicated boundary organisations deemed as unique hybrid organisations that are adept at resolving issues from bridging diverse organisational boundaries (Perkmann, McKelvey and Phillips, 2019; O'Mahony and Bechky 2008). The extant literature has demonstrated the novel ways by which universities and other institutions deploy hybrid organisations in structural forms to facilitate collaborations between academics and industry. This form of hybrid organising has proved useful for facilitating siloed collaborations in the instances of strict, formal, and regulated inclusion parameters as is evident for collaborations within the paradigms of academic entrepreneurship and academic engagement (Perkmann, McKelvey and Phillips, 2019; Perkmann and Schildt, 2015). However, in complex institutional environments where there exists myriad of collaboration opportunities among diverse stakeholders, the contestation arising from different institutional constituencies requires deliberate efforts aimed at resolving tensions whiles converging collaborative interests. Even so, we know little about how the underpinnings of structural or blended hybrid organising evolves within such contexts or the stability of intermediary organisations created to facilitate varied and multiple collaborations.

Key words: Innovation ecosystems, emerging innovation, stability of intermediary organisations, institutional environments

Rethinking the conceptualization of employee creativity and its influence on creativity willingness in the Nigerian manufacturing industry

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Abstract:

This study explores the conceptual assumptions of employee creativity and its probable influence on creativity willingness in the context of the Nigerian manufacturing industry. Over the years, early creativity researchers have focused on a uni-dimensional view of creativity and the perception that creativity is initiated by mainly creative employees (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). This notion of a person-centred approach seems to have yielded some important findings. These are findings regarding individual personality traits, backgrounds and even work styles of uniquely creative employees (Eleni et al., 2014). However, to further examine the attributes by which one may truly qualify an employee to be creative, Amabile (1997) propounded the componential theory of individual creativity (CTIC). This theory provides a thorough view into the employee creativity concept. Amabile (1997) defined the concept of employee creativity as “...simply the production of novel, appropriate ideas in any realm of human activity, from science to the arts, to education, to business, to everyday life”.

Key words: Employee creativity, creativity and Nigerian manufacturing industry

Nurturing environmentally responsible practices using top management role on effective training, and supplier orientation to promote green logistics management practices

Michael Oppong
Kumasi Technical University

Abstract

This study investigated top management role on effective environmental training, using supplier environmental orientation to promote green logistics management practices. The study employed a positivist world view was adopted to answer the question regarding the relationship between variables, thus making this a deductive study. A quantitative approach was followed in the study, which is in line with the selected paradigm. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the study population ie manufacturing, agricultural or agribusiness, mining or extraction, and logistics/transportation firms in Ghana. The Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) database was used to determine the size of the target population. The researchers employed the sample size estimation table devised by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Given the above, a sample size of 300 firms was selected from a total of 1178 respondents. The inclusion of descriptive statistics, such as Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (SD), contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the data. The application of SPSS software, version 25, for data analysis underscores a commitment to using reputable tools in the research process. The conclusion drawn from the results yielded robust reputable evidence in support of the positive relationship between environmental training and green logistics management practices.

Key words: Environmentally responsible practices, effective training, supplier orientation, green logistics

Not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be ignited: Towards a new perspective for business and management formation in Africa

David Weir

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Abstract:

This paper represents a response to the challenge laid out in one of the many publications of a great educationalist, politician, statesman and Ghanaian, Francis Bartels senior, whose first position of responsibility was as Principal of Mfantshipim School, his last as deputy Director of Unesco, but whose whole career is a great example of the ideas, values and deeds of the man himself. It also serves as a brief, personal memoir on my own part to the memory of this now deceased friend and of the other Francis Bartels junior, a young colleague when I was Director of the Bradford Management Centre, here in this city. Frank was the son of his great father and a deep friend and colleague of mine from our first meetings at Bradford to his untimely death. From both of these men I can say honestly that I learned much and would like to have learned more so I present these brief proposals as a small measure of the gratitude that I personally feel towards them both.

Key words: Business management, business formation, Africa

Leveraging sustainable advertising for advancing the UN SDGs: Insights from Ahead Media LTD in Ghana

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Abstract

Sustainable advertising plays a crucial role in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) globally. In Ghana, where socio-economic challenges persist amidst a growing advertising sector, the significance of sustainable advertising becomes pronounced. This extended abstract examines the importance of sustainable advertising in achieving the UN SDGs in Ghana, focusing on Ahead Media LTD as a case study. It defines sustainable advertising within the context of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethical marketing and explores its potential to drive societal change. Through a case study approach, it evaluates Ahead Media's sustainable advertising practices and their impact on SDG attainment in Ghana, highlighting its transformative potential. Implications for practice are discussed, emphasising the role of advertising agencies as agents of social responsibility and advocates for sustainable development.

Key words: Sustainable advertising, sustainable development goals (SDGs) and Ahead Media.

Reconceptualising learning loop logics for healthcare learning transformation: Cohered emergent theory application

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Abstract

Planning for sustainable organisational transformation is problematical for learning organisations because planning is characterised as managers' wisdom and power. Such conceptualisation does not explain the crucial emergent nature of organisational learning, which arises from employees' daily practices and interactions in context. The literature suggests combining single-loop learning, involving managerial wisdom and authority, and double-loop learning, drawing largely on employees' insights, to achieve triple-loop learning that goes to a higher-level learning and leads to organisational transformation. This does not account for power that impinges on effective organisational learning and responsible procedural design. To address these conceptual gaps, we will explain how managers can effectively collaborate with employees in designing transformative procedures and processes by interrelating single-loop and double-loop learning logics to account for the emergent complexity of organisations. We will draw on Cohered Emergent Theory and data from a large teaching hospital to reframe the learning loop logics and show that the triple-loop learning challenges and power issues can be resolved through collaboration and emergent planning processes. This is based on an extended Action Research study that reports complex and positive outcomes of healthcare learning practices over time to demonstrate the hospital's effort toward sustainable transformation.

Key words: Learning loop logics, healthcare learning transformation, cohered emergent theory and learning organisations

**Improving graduate employability through effective university-industry curriculum design:
A systematic literature review within 2014-2023**

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Abstract

University-industry collaboration is widely recognized as a catalyst for transformation, innovation, and graduate employment. Yet appropriation of this partnership to design effective employability curricula to enhance graduates' career prospects is limited in high impact literature. We conducted a systematic literature review spanning 2014-2023 from 95 ABS top-tier journal articles to analyse the university-industry collaboration with graduate employability curriculum focus to ascertain how much students are involved in designing university-industry collaboration. We found that the discourse on university-industry collaboration gravitates toward achieving complementarity in spatial disparity, knowledge exchange and commercialization, entrepreneurship, research and development, innovation, and teaching-focused collaboration.

These few studies often limit or omit students' involvement in design of curriculum that can improve graduates' job readiness in the industry. We also found that the collaboration arrangements to co-design curriculum are hampered by misaligned partner goals, mistrust, power imbalances, and rigid partnership arrangements. To address this theoretical gap and point to future research direction, we apply cohered emergent theory to conceptualise a novel framework to explain how universities, industries and governments can effectively incorporate the perspectives of students in university-industry collaboration to improve students' employability skills and graduate employment. Our framework has implications for theory, policy, and practice.

Key words: Graduate employability, university-industry collaboration and knowledge exchange

Testing a conditional mediation model of the reciprocal payoffs of performance management

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Abstract

Drawing from the social exchange theory, we proposed and tested a conditional mediation model of the reciprocal payoffs of performance management. This study is based upon survey data from employees in a Ghanaian parastatal organisation and uses regression with bootstrapping via Hayes's PROCESS techniques for the analyses. The results show that PM practices positively influence meaningful work and employee loyalty. Meaningful work also increases employee loyalty, and further significantly mediates the relationship between employee loyalty and each of the three PM practices. However, this mediation is only significant statistically among short-tenured employees compared to long-tenured employees. Consequently, our study provides original evidence to extend PM literature and its reciprocal psychological payoffs through the viewpoints of the social exchange theory. This is a crucial insight for minimising meaningfulness crises and averting destructive attitudes of employees, specifically, disloyalty in organisations.

Key words: Reciprocal payoffs, performance management, parastatal organisations, Hayes's process techniques

Introducing relationship banking and SDGs In Ghana

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Abstract

The landscape of financial intermediation in developing economies like Ghana is undergoing a transformative shift towards sustainable development. At the heart of this transition lies the interplay between relationship banking and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This extended abstract explores how the principles of relationship banking can be leveraged to advance the SDGs in Ghana, emphasizing the potential for banks to act as pivotal agents of socio-economic change. Relationship banking, characterized by the close interaction between banks and their clients, offers a unique framework for understanding customer needs and providing customized financial solutions (Boot, 2000). This approach contrasts with transactional banking, which focuses on isolated financial transactions devoid of a deeper client-bank relationship. The SDGs, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, set forth a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. Ghana, like many developing countries, has aligned its national development agenda with these goals, highlighting the urgency of innovative financing strategies to achieve them (United Nations, 2015). In Ghana, relationship banking has the potential to significantly contribute to SDG 8, which aims to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. By fostering long-term banking relationships, financial institutions can better understand and cater to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are crucial for economic growth and job creation.

Key words: Relationship Banking, sustainable development goals (SDGs), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), client-bank relationship and developing economies

Law & Society Track

Access to higher education for people living with disabilities in Ghana following the sustainable development goals

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Elizabeth Izac-Hassan

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Abstract

This paper seeks to review the status and rights of adult learners living with disabilities in Ghana, in connection with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As part of a larger study, this paper reviews the legal framework for safeguarding their interests such as access to education, and identifying factors that inhibit their educational pursuits or progress.

Reforming legal education in Ghana: law-related education on fundamental human rights for high school students in the suburb of Kumasi, Ghana

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Abstract

Regarding the methodology for gathering data, I intended to use a closed survey approach by sending questionnaires to groups of high school students, junior and senior students. My study focuses on teaching high school students about the law. This methodology enables me to evaluate the accomplishment of our research objectives. The selected technique for gathering data entails sending out questionnaires with closed-ended questions, i.e. surveys, to a significant portion of middle and high school pupils. A total of 100 students participated in a survey, consisting of 49 females and 51 males. 60 students attended public schools, while 40 students attended private schools. Furthermore, 50 students were in junior high school and the remaining 50 were in senior high school. All 100 students claimed to have knowledge of human rights, with 86 gaining their understanding from school, 9 from home, and 5 from the media. Interestingly, 37 thought that only people from the upper class should have rights, while 63 thought that everyone should have rights, regardless of social class. In reference to the protection of human rights, 50 students thought that no one could take away a person's rights, 1 student thought that a supervisor could, 16 thought that a criminal could, and 33 thought that a judge could.

Key words: Legal education, Ghana, human rights

A quantitative assessment of arbitration related cases before the Kenyan courts from 1996 to 2022: To enforce or not to enforce? to annul or not to annul? the Kenyan perspective

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide quantitative data on cases before the Kenyan court seeking the enforcement or annulment of an arbitral award. Commercial arbitration continues to gain prominence globally as one of the premier alternatives to dispute resolution. Moreover, research shows that the attractiveness of an arbitral seat has the potential to positively impact investment flow into a country. To understand the determination of the courts when presented with an application to enforce or annul an arbitral award, a search is carried out on 'Kenya Law' which is a case repository with all court cases before the different courts in Kenya. The search is limited to relevant cases before the court between 1996 and 2022 and assesses cases before the High Court as the court of first instance as well as the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court as courts with appellate jurisdiction. The findings highlight that in cases before the High Court, the court is mostly supportive of the enforcement of arbitral awards as most of the annulment applications are dismissed and enforcement applications allowed. Arbitral awards being challenged or sought to be enforced are predominantly domestic in nature with only a handful of applications based on international arbitral awards. There are significantly fewer cases in the appellate courts. In the Court of Appeal, the judgements mostly upheld the ruling from the court of first instance. This is not the case in the appeals before the Supreme Court where three of the four appeals were allowed.

Key words: Arbitration, Kenyan courts, Commercial arbitration

Petroleum fiscal regime in question of regulatory

Ghana and the stability

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Abstract

This article examines the regulatory regime for the fiscal arrangement in the petroleum industry of Ghana. It identifies the objective of getting revenue and the need to ensure there is stability in the fiscal regime in order to avoid challenges that may be posed by regulatory changes leading to investor-state arbitration.

Key words: Petroleum, fiscal regime, regulatory stability

Challenges with the enforcement of judgments-the Ghanaian law perspective

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Abstract

Enforcing judgments can indeed be challenging, and this is not unique to Ghanaian courts; it is a common issue faced in legal systems worldwide. Araba obtains judgment for the payment of a sum GH65,000 against Moja but finds that Moja has no assets (movable or immovable) to satisfy the debt. Consequently, Araba decides to initiate garnishee proceedings against a bank, which is indebted to Moja, seeking an order for the bank to pay her the amount owed by Moja. If the bank disputes the debt claimed by Araba, a legal process will unfold to determine the validity of the debt and the bank's obligation to pay. There may also be a claim to property taken in execution known as interpleader. The legal procedures for enforcement of judgments can be complex and time-consuming. In most cases, parties have resorted to alternative enforcement methods. It is our opinion that requiring parties to provide security for judgment debts can discourage judgment debtors from evading their obligations post-litigation. Whilst security for judgment debts can be a valuable tool in ensuring enforcement and fairness in litigation, it requires careful balancing of interests and thoughtful implementation within the legal system to achieve its intended benefits effectively.

Key words: Judgments, Ghana, post-litigation

The unlawful global business of contemporary slavery and trafficking in human beings. case study - trafficking from Africa to Europe – A case study of women trafficking from Kenya to Italy for the purpose of sexual exploitation

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate the root causes of Human Trafficking of young women from Eastern Africa to Europe. The research considers the impact that trafficking has on sending and receiving countries. It focuses on their immigration status upon arrival in Europe, it considers areas such as the identification of victims by European authorities, their reception and the support provided. Available literature suggests that there is a need for a more balanced approach to research on trafficking, which, to-date has been primarily ‘Western-centric’ with very limited ‘Afro-centric’ research (TWAAIL). The research intends to ascertain why there is such a ready supply of African women for the sex trade in an increasing number of European cities. It will investigate the means by which both sending and receiving country governments, statutory and voluntary organisation and other stakeholders are combating this vile crime as well as their efficacy. The existing literature on human trafficking from Africa to Europe is very low, compared to research on trafficking from other parts of the world. The exiting research on Africa and African victims is manly focused on the West Africa region, Nigeria in particular. This study intends to fill the gap in the existing literature by focusing on East Africa and specifically Kenya. HT is a gender-oriented crime; it is the only area of transnational crime in which women are significantly represented - as victims, perpetrators and activists.

Key words: Contemporary slavery, human trafficking, women trafficking, sexual exploitation

Inalienable Right of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy Revisited -From Troublemaker to Promising Oldcomer as a Development Tool

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This research purports to shed light on the most unnoticed reality of the inalienable right of peaceful use of nuclear energy as a promising “oldcomer” as a development tool, focusing on the multilateral technical cooperation (TC) programme of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This right, enshrined in Article 4 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has often been regarded as a stumbling block of the treaty, due to the well-known dual-use character of nuclear power production. Irrespective of this image of the right as a troublemaker, the IAEA has made relentless efforts to achieve development goals, recently formulated as SDGs, by fulfilling the rights of developing countries through its TC. According to its general trends and data, IAEA’s TC programme has represented both the logics of development law and non-proliferation law and allocated less budget to power production than other technologies without risk of diversion to weapons programmes, like cancer therapy, pandemic prevention and response, water management, and agriculture, and Africa is the most crucial target region due to its unique socio-economic challenges. It is indicated that the budget scale of the TC has been balanced with that of IAEA’s safeguard activities based on NPT’s grand bargain. These characters exemplify that the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy has appeared in the IAEA’s TC as a promising development tool with less risk of nuclear weapons proliferation. The principal challenges of this right are awareness-raising and, most importantly, justification in complex cases like Iran’s nuclear issue.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Nuclear Energy, International Atomic Energy Agency, Non-Proliferation Treaty, Technical Cooperation Programme

Economics Track

The impact of diversity and inclusion on firm-level climate risk exposure

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Abstract

Climate change presents substantial risks to businesses and economies globally, affecting financial performance, operational resilience, and long-term sustainability. Acknowledging these challenges, organizations increasingly recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion (D&I) practices in shaping their ability to manage and mitigate climate-related risks. Diversity encompasses various individual differences, such as race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and disability status, while inclusion entails creating environments where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives. Research in organizational behavior and management indicates that diverse and inclusive workplaces are not only more innovative and productive but also better equipped to navigate complex challenges, including those posed by climate change. Diverse teams offer a range of perspectives and experiences, enhancing problem-solving and decision-making related to climate risk assessment and management. Additionally, inclusive cultures foster trust and collaboration, enabling effective coordination in responding to climate-related disruptions. Despite these benefits, challenges persist. Marginalized groups often bear a disproportionate burden of climate impacts, exacerbating existing inequalities. Systemic barriers and biases within organizations can hinder the full participation of diverse voices in climate resilience efforts. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that embracing diversity and fostering inclusion can enhance organizational resilience and competitiveness in the face of climate change. To investigate this further, this study conducts a comprehensive examination of the impact of D&I on firm-level climate risk exposure. Utilizing climate risk exposure data from the Thompson Reuters US dataset.

Various methods, including 2SLS, PSM, and entropy balancing, will be employed to address endogeneity concerns. Robustness and heterogeneity analyses further support the initial hypothesis, underscoring the critical role of D&I in enhancing organizational preparedness and resilience. By embracing D&I practices, organizations can drive innovation, strengthen adaptive capacity, and contribute to broader societal efforts towards climate adaptation and mitigation. However, further research is needed to better understand the specific mechanisms through which D&I influences organizational responses to climate-related challenges.

Key words: Diversity, inclusion, climate risk, sustainability

Stability and capital ratio of banks under uncertainty: Does financial constraints matter?

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Abstract:

Can reforms aimed at regional banking sector integration lead to bank-level uncertainty? We investigate this question, by examining the impact of bank-level uncertainty on the ratios of capital and stability in five Southeast Asian economies: Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. Findings show Southeast Asian banks are significantly exposed to financial constraints, negatively impacting bank capital ratios. Further, it reveals that bank uncertainty leads to a 60% decrease in regional bank stability. This adverse effect is robust to alternative measures of uncertainty and, does not reflect in the differences in regional economic cycles. We use 882 yearly observations for commercial banks operating in the five economies as mentioned earlier from 2009 to 2022. The study employs the system-GMM dynamic panel estimation, and the Principal Component Analysis (PCP), and constructs a novice volatility series. The findings demonstrate that bank uncertainty and financial constraints threaten regional banking integration's overall financial health and intended benefits.

Keywords Financial constraint, bank uncertainty, stability, capital ratio, Southeast Asian

Africa's equity, exchange rate and global equity indices, interconnectedness: Did Covid-19 make any difference?

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Abstract

This study examines the co-movement and time-varying integration between equity, exchange rate and international market volatility indices across different time-frequency domains using wavelet and time-varying VAR(TVP-VAR) during COVID-19 pandemic for selected African countries. First, the findings indicate that co-movement between equity and exchange rates during the pandemic era was exacerbated by world COVID-19 media coverage. Second, the findings reveal that African equity markets transmit a negative shock both regional and global for equity market and Egypt, Ghana, and Nigeria transmit positive shocks for exchange rate returns on regional bases. In general, we establish a strong link between international market volatility indices and the selected African financial markets. The sentiment effect of market volatility is found to be asymmetric with the connectedness of all equity markets. This effect reveals the inefficient market dynamics is exacerbated by investors' irrational behaviour during COVID-19 and highlights the heterogeneous and adaptive market hypothesis.

Keywords: Equity market, exchange rate, interdependence, wavelet coherence, VAR time varying parameter.

Underscoring the role of financial expansion, clean energy, economic growth, and governance in energy poverty alleviation in emerging economies

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Abstract

Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG 7) aim to address energy poverty by ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy for all. Energy poverty (EP) refers to the lack of physical access to sufficient energy services and the inability to use and consume cutting-edge energy resources due to various factors (Dogan et al., 2022). Based on a United Nations estimate, nearly 3 billion of the world's population lack access to clean energy (Lin & Okyere, 2023). By 2030, it is further estimated that close to 660 million people across the globe will still lack access to electricity (Murshed & Ozturk, 2023). Although EP affects both developed and developing countries, developing countries, especially Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are the hardest hit (Maji, 2019; Ndubuisi et al., 2023; Ongo Nkoa et al., 2023; Shettima et al., 2023). World Bank data show that SSA has the global lowest electricity access rate at 47% (Ndubuisi et al., 2023; Shettima et al., 2023). SSA is home to almost 75% of the global population that lacks access to modern electricity services (United Nations, 2020 p38). SSA is the only subregion in the world where the number of people without electricity rose from 492.12 million to 589.46 million between 2000 and 2019 (Ongo Nkoa et al., 2023). To address the research gap, this study examines the linear and non-linear effects of financial expansion (FE), clean energy (CE), economic growth (GDP growth) and governance structures (GE) on four dimensions of EP in Africa.

Key Words: Financial expansion, clean energy, economic growth, governance, emerging economies

Beyond "Africa Rising": A critical look at industrialization and development in sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the "Africa Rising" narrative, a popular framing of Sub-Saharan Africa's recent economic growth. While acknowledging positive indicators, the analysis argues for a more nuanced understanding. We challenge the narrative's emphasis on financialised capitalism and its downplaying of industrialisation's role in development. Drawing on data from the World Bank, IMF, AfDB, and Afrobarometer, the study reveals a disconnect between the narrative and reality. Despite high GDP growth, Sub-Saharan Africa's development path diverges from established models. The region continues to rely heavily on primary commodity exports with declining manufacturing value added. This contrasts with historical development success stories like East Asia, where industrialisation played a critical role. We advocate for moving beyond "Africa Rising" and exploring alternative development strategies. Prioritising robust manufacturing sectors and fostering value-added production within Africa is crucial. This necessitates critically examining neoliberal ideology and its potential limitations in promoting sustainable and equitable growth across the continent.

Keywords: Africa Rising, industrialisation, development, Sub-Saharan Africa, neoliberalism

Risks and governance implications of financial technologies: A developing country context

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Abstract

Financial technology (FinTech) is a rapidly evolving field of technology that has revolutionized the way financial services are delivered, managed, and consumed. FinTech has become a powerful force in the financial services industry, enabling companies to offer more innovative and efficient services, create new products and services, and expand into new markets (Gomber, Kauffman, Parker, & Weber, 2018). However, with the rapid growth of FinTech also comes increased risk, which must be managed to protect consumers and ensure the stability of the financial services industry. The risks associated with FinTech can be broadly categorized into three main areas: operational risk, cyber security risk, and regulatory risk (Ng & Kwok, 2017; Vučinić, 2020; Chen & Sivakumar, 2021). Operational risk encompasses the risks associated with the delivery of financial services, such as the accuracy and reliability of financial data, system and network security, and customer service. Cyber security risk relates to the threats posed by malicious actors, such as hackers and cybercriminals. Regulatory risk relates to compliance with applicable laws and regulations, such as consumer protection laws, data privacy laws, and anti-money laundering regulations (Yuan & Duoqi, 2020; Brown & Piroška, 2022).

Key words: FinTech, risk, governance, financial services, cyber security

Theoretical and mathematical frameworks for understanding the dynamics of coup d'état in sub-Saharan Africa: A quantitative analysis of economic determinants

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Abstract:

The study investigates the economic determinants of coup d'etat in Sub-Saharan Africa, employing a quantitative approach rooted in Adams's Equity Theory. Utilizing panel logistic regression modeling, the research reveals that societal inequality amplifies the risk of coup attempts. The variables examined include poverty, unemployment, inflation, taxes, central government spending, corruption perception, regional spillover effects, exchange rates, and interest rates. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing these factors through progressive taxation, social safety nets, inclusive economic growth, poverty alleviation, and stable economic conditions to mitigate the risk of coup incidents. The research aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, directly contributing to goals such as SDG 1, SDG 8 and SDG 10 by exploring the economic dimensions of political stability and development. Policymakers are urged to prioritize transparency, accountability, and the rule of law to further diminish the likelihood of coup d'etat occurrences in the region.

Keywords: Coup d'etat, Adams Equity Theory, Gini Coefficient, corruption perception index, exogeneity, and endogeneity

Corporate social health accounting and reporting, and tax avoidance

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between corporate social health accounting and reporting (CSHAR) and tax avoidance (CTA) as well as the moderation effect of international tax competitiveness (ITC) of corporate jurisdictions on the relationship between CSHAR and CTA. The study employs a large sample of 1,971 firms within 47 countries from 2002 to 2020. First, the findings indicate that CSHAR ameliorates the CTA behaviour of firms in general and the findings are more pronounced in common law countries since the findings are insignificant for civil law countries. Second, ITC significantly moderates the CSHAR–CTA nexus indicating that countries with better tax codes that enhance competitiveness and neutrality tend to exhibit less avoidance. The findings are robust to different sensitivity tests and estimation techniques. The findings are interpreted within a legitimacy theoretical framework that incorporates insights from organisational façade and signalling predictions with implications for investors, policymakers, shareholders and tax authorities.

Key words: Corporate social health accounting, reporting, and tax avoidance

Social Science Track

Embedding gender equality in sustainable research and innovation: The RRING project

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Abstract

This paper is an excerpt of the Responsible Research and Innovation Networking Globally (RRING), a large-scale research project commissioned by the European Union under the Horizon 2020 programme. The overarching aim of the RRING study was to bring RRI into the linked-up global world to promote mutual learning and collaboration in RRI. This was to be achieved through the formation of the global RRING community network and the development and mobilization of a global Open Access RRI knowledge base. The project also aimed to align RRI to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global common denominator. The objective of task 4.3.4 of the RRING project (led by the University of Bradford as the gender expert on the programme) was designed with the objectives of conducting an in-depth, theme-specific comparative analysis across four domains (Energy, ICT, Bio-economy and Waste Management) focusing on the theme of gender equality (RRI Key), diversity and Inclusion (AIRR dimension) and across the 5 UNESCO geographic regions, for all research performing organisations and research funding organisations; and to map out the linked up global RRI policies and practices, the role of nation states and international organisations in developing gender equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies for the conduct of RRI. The task relied on textual data gathered from transcripts of qualitative interviews conducted in WP 5 - qualitative interviews (n = 152), and WP 3 – open ended survey (n = 2300). Thematic content analysis was used for data analysis, involving the development of a codebook (through inductive and deductive approaches) leading to the emergence of patterns along domains and geographies. Findings indicate significant variations across the domains and geographies in the understanding of the importance of gender EDI in research and innovation (R&I).

Key words: Gender equality, sustainable research, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

The effects of child labour on children's education in the Kwabre District of Ashanti Region of Ghana.

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Abstract

The problem of child labour has raised serious concern to stakeholders in education and has occupied the center stage in both international and local decisions. On the global perspective, child labour is very active in countries like India, Morocco, Senegal and many countries in Latin – America, Africa and Eastern Europe. It is seen as a cause and consequence of poverty, and it squanders a nation's human capital. It impedes the education of children. The worst form of child labour such as small-scale mining, farming etc. The concerns about child labour are logical in that children who work in our societies may use part of their contact hours to engage in their work. Most educationists believe that children need time to be able to go through their curriculum; therefore, all activities which may use up part of learners' time must not be entertained. Again, child labour, no matter what form it may take, is likely to use up children's energy. Since a child's energy has direct association with his or her performance in class it is logical to believe that child labour may preclude children from active learning. It is against that the researcher would like to know about the effects of Child labour on Children's Education.

Key words: Child labour, poverty, Ghana, human capital

Green transport and the influence of perceived garage services of Universities in Ghana

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Abstract

Students 'enrolment among Universities in Ghana is growing each year due to the introduction of the free senior high policy by the Government of Ghana. Together with students, staff population as well as the growing population of the six surrounding communities of University of Cape Coast, this is inevitably putting more pressure on the Universities' internal transportation system. The problems are particularly acute in the diaspora communities where majority of the student populations leave and where the demand for mobility has greatly increased. Consequently, taxis, tricycle has become the mode of transport for the student in the diaspora. It is expected that, informal taxi transport and private owned vehicles as a mode of transport by these students is sustainable, safer, more comfortable, environmentally friendly and convenient to support their campus activities. This study focuses on green transport and the influence of perceived garage services among the informal taxi transport and private owned vehicle transport services operating in Universities in Ghana with specific reference to University of Cape Coast and the surrounding communities. Quantitative techniques were used in this study. Questionnaires were administered to some selected transport managers of informal taxi transport operating within universities communities. Analyses were made on the tables and bar chart generated using SPSS to measure the response of respondents on green transport and perceived garage services. The study recommends that other mode of transport apart from motor vehicle should be introduce to students as been practice elsewhere to promote sustainable green transportation among Universities in Ghana.

Key words: Green Transport, Transport modes, Diaspora Communities, Garage Services

Linguistic difficulties of health educational materials: A sub-national level assessment and implications for adolescent health literacy in Ghana

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Abstract

Evaluate the readability, comprehensibility, and vocabulary knowledge of SRH educational materials available online and on paper to inform health educational material development for young adolescents. The study used a sequential mixed-methods design. Thirty-four online and one print adolescent sexual and reproductive health educational materials were assessed for readability. Two hundred and sixty-three adolescents aged 11–15, participated in the comprehension and vocabulary knowledge assessment of the online sexual and reproductive health materials. Comprehensibility was measured using a cloze test, and vocabulary knowledge was also assessed based on a vocabulary knowledge passage. Data processing was performed using SPSS, version 23.0 and the online readability consensus calculator, version 1.0. The results show higher readability levels for online materials. Flesch reading ease scores range between 40% and 72%. Reading grade level statistics, including the Flesch Reading Grade Level, Gunning Fog Index, Simple. Measure of Gobbledygook, and Common-Lieu Index, had a minimum score of 6 and a highest score of 16. Nearly 51% of participants read at the instructional level, and 21% read with frustration. The participants found 29 of the words in the vocabulary as unfamiliar and difficult, and 14 as familiar but difficult to understand. Improving adolescents' access to print and internet-based SRH educational materials in easy-to-read formats will be valuable at all levels. Such an effort can encourage independent reading and advance SRH knowledge in privacy.

Key words: Linguistic difficulties, health education, sub-national level assessment, adolescent health, Ghana

Performativity and marginalisation of blacks in the UK's higher and further education sector

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Abstract

Whiteness is an unnamed phenomenon and can operate in plain sight which, is partly why it is so entrenched and pernicious. This study uses the critical race theory to argue that the dominant actors in the UK's Higher and further education sector seek to obscure the impact of racism on black progress by asserting that society is approaching colour blindness.

Key words: Performativity, marginalisation, UK, higher education, further education

An Eclectic approach to addressing poor reading habits of primary pupils in Ghana

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Abstract

Reading is seen as one of the most crucial skills pupils need to make progress in life. Yet Ghana's education system seems to fail early-year pupils in learning how to read and write. This study uses the eclectic approach and semi-structured interviews, observation, and survey questionnaires as data collection instruments in enhancing our understanding of some of the measures that the Ghana education service needs to put in place to improve and encourage pupils to read. The data analysis revealed some interesting findings about the way pupils in Ghana read and the habits they have formed which influences their ability to read. One of the major findings is the ability of teachers and pupils to identify words in a text, cultivating the habit of reading and getting used to various reading materials from all corners. The UN SDG4 argues that quality education is the hallmark of successful societies. Quality education also has the capacity to reduce inequalities in poor communities in Africa, therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the cause of poor reading habits among primary school pupils in Ghana using Penteng Nwase Primary School as a case study. The study designed an eclectic approach to enhance the reading skills of pupils.

Key words: Eclectic approach, poor reading, primary pupils, Ghana

Catalyst for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in advancing sustainable development goals (SDGs) globally, particularly in countries like Ghana where socio-economic challenges persist. This extended abstract explores the landscape of NGOs in Ghana and their contributions to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals in Ghana. It highlights the diverse roles NGOs play in addressing poverty, promoting education, ensuring gender equality, enhancing healthcare, and fostering environmental sustainability. The analysis draws on existing literature, reports, and case studies to underscore the significance of NGOs as agents of change in Ghanaian society. Moreover, it examines the challenges facing NGOs in Ghana and proposes strategies to maximize their effectiveness in advancing sustainable development.

Key words: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Science & Engineering Track

A comparative study of the impact of volcanic ash on building roofs in Africa and Europe within the volcanic prone areas.

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Stefan Kaczmarczyk s

University of Northampton, Northampton, United Kingdom

Abstract

This study investigates the differing effects of volcanic ash on building roofs in Africa and Europe, addressing the gap in research concerning African volcanic-prone regions. While European sites have been extensively studied, African volcanic areas remain understudied despite frequent occurrences. Employing the methodology outlined by Quainoo et al. (2022), the study assesses the impact of volcanic ash on roofs in African volcanic-prone regions and compares it with European counterparts. With over 150 catalogued volcanic sites in Africa, understanding the vulnerabilities of building roofs is crucial, particularly considering Africa's projected population growth. The study emphasises methodologies and results pertaining to the impact of volcanic ash on building roofs, especially in economically challenged African countries. Traditional roofing materials prevalent in Africa, such as thatching and mud, pose significant risks in volcanic-prone areas. The study underscores the necessity for enhanced building regulations and resilient roof designs in African volcanic regions, urging for governmental support and international attention to mitigate the potential catastrophic effects of volcanic ash on building roofs.

Key words: Volcanic, building roofs, Africa, Europe.

Heavy metal levels in waste dumpsites and risk assessment of cucumber (*cucumis sativus* L.) fruits cultivated in Coastal Savannah.

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Abstract

Backyard farming of cucumber on waste dumpsites could be a potential health threat to the consuming public. This study assessed the levels of Fe, Cu, Hg, and Pb metals in both soil and cucumber fruit at harvest under field conditions. Three active dumpsites and a background soil samples were collected at a depth of 0 - 30 cm for the study. Metals' levels in cucumber and soils before planting and at harvest of cultivated matured cucumber fruits were determined using a Niton XL3t GOLD field portable XRF (X-ray fluorescence spectrometer). The physicochemical properties of dumpsites soil were at improved levels than in the background soil. All studied metals were in higher levels in dumpsites soil than in the background soil. Specifically, Pomadze dumpsite soil exhibited elevated levels of Fe, Pb, and Hg that exceeded allowable limits, and in cucumber fruits. Pollution indices, Igeo, EF, TR, and TF, indicated contamination levels for Fe, Hg, and Pb in an increasing order: New Winneba background soil < Oguakurom dumpsite soil < UEW south campus dumpsite soil < Pomadze dumpsite soil. To avoid the harmful effects of the heavy metals accumulation on human health, Pomadze dumpsite be excavated and relocated to a designated landfill site at nsuakyire to mitigate potential health risks.

Keywords: Backyard farming, Cucumber fruit, Dumpsite soil, Soil Physicochemical, XRF, Pollution indices

Development of a conceptual benchmarking framework for the construction industry

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Abstract

Due to the industry's peculiarities, existing benchmarking frameworks and performance measurement tools are not suitable for the construction industry. This paper explores the development of a dedicated benchmarking framework for the construction industry which can be used by construction firms to benchmark their performance against the performance of global leaders. Existing benchmarking frameworks and global performance ranking models identified from literature were reviewed. The strengths and weaknesses of the frameworks and models were identified and have been adapted in developing the benchmarking framework dedicated to the construction industry. The framework was tested using validation interviews with four international construction industry experts and later through an online survey of construction professionals. The benchmarking framework in this paper is the first such framework dedicated to the construction industry. It provides a simple, cost-effective approach to benchmarking that construction firms, including those with little to no benchmarking experience, can use.

Key words: Benchmarking framework, construction industry, UK

Discrete event simulation modelling to test improvements in an emergency department majors unit.

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Abstract

Addressing emergency department (ED) crowding presents a multifaceted challenge, worsened by the need to effectively evaluate proposed solutions. Leveraging simulation modelling techniques, particularly discrete event simulation (DES), offers a promising avenue to assess the effectiveness of interventions prior to real-world implementation. In this study, DES modelling was employed using Simul8 software to evaluate improvement proposals tailored for a Majors unit within the ED. Role activity diagrams (RAD) which were previously used for process mapping and bottleneck identification were subsequently used to develop flow charts to serve as input to the DES model. The analysis zeroed in on three primary bottlenecks affecting ED wait times: awaiting specialty input, tests outside ED and awaiting transportation. By subjecting these novel suggestions to simulation testing, observed tangible reductions in patient wait times across various scenarios were observed. This study underscores the advantage of DES in evaluating improvement strategies, offering valuable insights for ED management and enhancing patient care outcomes.

Key words: Discrete event simulation modelling (DES), emergency department unit.

Nutritional and phytochemical composition of watermelon seed powder as dietary supplement for diabetes intervention

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Abstract

This study seeks to develop watermelon seed powder and assess the proximate, mineral, and phytochemical constituents for the management of diabetes in Ghana. The proximate analysis and phytochemicals screening were assessed using standard procedures whereas mineral content was determined by atomic absorption spectrophotometry. Folin-ciocalteu assays were used to determine the phytochemical contents. Microbiological assays to determine the total aerobic bacterial and fungal loads were determined using the pour plate and spread plate approaches on plate count agar and Saboraud dextrose agar respectively. Shelf-life was estimated using Statgraphics Centurion XV software at storage temperatures of 5°C, 27°C, and 37°C. The watermelon seed powder was microbially safe for consumption with total aerobic count of 1.20×10^3 cfu/g and a total fungal count of 5.2×10^1 cfu/g with an estimated shelf-life of 2 months when stored at room temperature and 16 months when refrigerated. Watermelon seed powder was found to be low in carbohydrates ($6.02\% \pm 0.71$), fibre-rich ($39.89\% \pm 0.45$), fat-dense ($26.75\% \pm 0.42$), and low in protein ($17.61\% \pm 0.58$). Ca (27.01mg/Kg), Cu (0.42mg/Kg), Mg (13.09mg/Kg), Zn (0.73mg/Kg), Na (89.48mg/Kg), K (77.02mg/Kg) and Fe (0.47mg/Kg) were detected in the seed powder. Alkaloids, glycosides, saponins phenols (54.75mg/g), tannins (82.17mg/g), and flavonoids (2.05mg/g) which act as alpha-glucosidase inhibitors and glucose metabolism modulators were found. Watermelon seed powder has an ideal nutritional profile as a low carbohydrate diet and low protein diet for the management of diabetes.

Key words: Phytochemical, watermelon seed, dietary supplement, diabetes, intervention

Tackling diet-related non-communicable diseases in a Ghanaian population: An assessment of nutritional knowledge and cooking practices of fast-food vendors in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana

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Abstract

Fast-food vendors have been identified as stakeholders responsible for meal preparation and provision to majority of people and households. However, little is known about their general knowledge on nutrition and diet-related diseases. The study therefore assesses the nutritional knowledge and cooking practices of fast-food vendors in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted in three in Kumasi, Ghana. A simple probability sampling technique was used to select the three study sites. The study recruited 210 fast-food vendors based on chance per their location. Interviews were conducted with a semi-structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse continuous variables. Inferential statistics such as chi-square was used to compare the nutrition knowledge scores with the participants' demographic characteristics. Female respondents accounted for 66.2%. More than 80% of participants have attained pre-tertiary education, with the majority receiving nutrition education at the pre-tertiary level. The study found 49% of the participants had inadequate knowledge in nutrition, while only 6.2% had adequate nutrition knowledge. Participants' knowledge adequacy and inadequacy on diet-related NCDs, was 5.2% vs. 60%. A significant difference ($p=0.009$, $p\leq 0.005$) was observed in nutrition knowledge adequacy among participants' gender and level of education respectively. Also, it was noted that all participants reused their oils several times for deep frying. Majority of the fast-food vendors had inadequate knowledge in nutrition and diet-related diseases, and most of them tend to reuse frying oil many times, which can increase trans-fat levels.

Key Words: Diet, non-communicable diseases, Ghana, population, nutritional knowledge, fast food

Predictors of Hypertension among diabetic patients in the Ejisu Municipality of Ghana

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Abstract

The co-existence of hypertension with diabetes mellitus among diabetic patients is a setback to public health. About 40-75% of diabetic patients present with hypertension. The co-existence of hypertension and diabetes can accelerate complications such as stroke, myocardial infarction, nephropathy, and mortality. Available data indicate the devastating effects of hypertension and diabetes on individuals, families, and the economy as catastrophic. Therefore, knowing the predictors of hypertension among diabetic patients would inform the lifestyle and management of the two conditions. The study focused on predictors of hypertension among diabetic patients in the Ejisu Municipality of Ghana. The study employed a quantitative approach with a sample size of 120. Data were collected on sociodemographic characteristics, family history, 24-hour dietary recall, blood pressure, fasting blood glucose, glycated haemoglobin, total lipid profile, and anthropometrics. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Out of 120 respondents, 85% were females with 77.5% above 50 years of age. A majority (66.7%) had a family history of diabetes with 76.7% having hypertension as a comorbidity. Fasting blood glucose was found to be 8.519 times more likely to present with hypertension. Systolic blood pressure, carbohydrate, and sodium intakes were 6.1%, 2.9%, and 0.1% respectively. However, diabetic patients with high HbA1c were 97% less likely not to present with hypertension. Hypertension was found to be the common comorbidity among diabetic patients in Ghana. Glycaemic control, systolic blood pressure, and dietary factors specifically carbohydrate and sodium intake were significant predictors of hypertension among the study participants.

Key words: Hypertension diabetic patients, public health, Ghana

The impact of polypharmacy and potentially inappropriate medicines on health outcomes in the elderly

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Abstract

Polypharmacy is defined as the use of five or more medicines. It causes non-adherence and adverse drug reactions (ADRs). The elderly are susceptible to ADRs due to changes in pharmacokinetic activities. PIMs are defined as medicines that can introduce a risk of ADRs to a patient, particularly when there is a more effective alternative available with a lower risk. This research aims to estimate the prevalence of polypharmacy and PIMs in the UK and to determine their associations with mortality, hospitalization, ADRs and falls at one and five years. A retrospective cohort study was carried out using 1000 patients aged 75 years and above from the Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD). Variables were retrieved using medical and product codes from the CPRD code browser. Polypharmacy was estimated as the average number of medicines at a cut-off point of ≥ 5 . PIMs were estimated using the Screening Tool of Older People's Prescriptions (STOPP) criteria. The associations between polypharmacy or PIMs and mortality, falls, ADRs or hospitalization were determined using logistic regression analysis. Adjusted Odd Ratios (ORs) with their 95% Confidence Intervals (CI) for polypharmacy and outcomes at five years were mortality 1.69(1.2-2.2), hospitalization 2.25(1.6-3.2), falls 1.39(0.8-2.3) and ADRs 1.02(0.6- 1.8). ORs for outcomes at one year were mortality 2.26(1.3-3.9), hospitalization 2.36(1.3-4.2) and falls 0.32(0.03-3.4). In this research, polypharmacy was found to be an independent risk factor for mortality and hospitalization. PIMs were found to be a risk factor for falls.

Key words: Polypharmacy, inappropriate medicines and adverse drug reactions (ADR)

The use of lateritic aggregate (la) and coconut husk fibre (chf) in concrete production for sustainable construction

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Abstract

Natural aggregate forms the bulk volume of concrete and has contributed to the increased cost of concrete production. This has led to the search for alternate aggregates such as lateritic for concrete production. This paper investigates the engineering properties of concrete produced with lateritic aggregate (LA) as the coarse aggregate replacement and coconut husk fibre (CHF) as reinforcement. Natural stone aggregate was replaced by LA at 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50%, with 0.25% constant CHF by weight. A mix proportion of 1:1.5:3 with a water-cement ratio of 0.6 was used for producing concrete. A total of 162 specimens (90 cubes and 72 beams) were prepared and tested at the 7, 14, 21, and 28 days of curing. The highest compressive strength of 43.36 N/mm² (10% LA replacement) as compared to the control of 41.51 N/mm². The 10% LA replacement obtained the highest flexural strength of 5.35 N/mm² as compared with the 5.29 N/mm² for the control. The water absorption of the concrete increased from 2.8% (control) to 3.57% (50% replacement LA). Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) revealed micro gaps between CHF and LA concrete. The study, therefore, concludes that the use of LA and CHF positively influenced the strength properties of concrete. 10% LA replacement of coarse aggregate and 0.25% CHF is recommended to practitioners for use.

Key words: Lateritic aggregate (la), coconut husk fibre (chf), concrete production and sustainable construction

Towards affordable and clean energy in Africa: SDG 7

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Abstract

Achieving affordable and clean energy accessibility by any country is essential to any economy wishing to develop rapidly and carry a significant amount of its populace along. In this work, we consider the strategies that have been implemented and on-going, their limitations and potentials. It is observed that despite several intervention strategies, several projects risk fall short of their sustainability targets due to the uniqueness of the African context. We therefore look into possible support strategies that can either revive or provide means of sustainability on future projects.

Key words: Affordable energy, clean energy, SDG 7

AI and Data Science

Promoting inclusive and quality education through technology-enabled learning

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Abstract

Education is a fundamental human right and a catalyst for sustainable development, as recognized by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2015). However, achieving this goal remains a significant challenge, particularly in developing countries, where access to quality education is often hindered by various socioeconomic, geographic, and infrastructural barriers (Trucano, 2013; Unwin et al., 2017). While several prior studies have explored the potential of technology-enabled learning solutions, such as online platforms, mobile applications, and virtual classrooms, in improving educational access and quality (Voogt et al., 2013; Becker et al., 2018), there is a lack of comprehensive research addressing the unique challenges faced by developing countries. Many existing solutions fail to account for the diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, technological infrastructure limitations, and cultural contexts prevalent in these regions (Hollow et al., 2015; Kshetri et al., 2019). The proposed solution incorporates strategies for addressing issues such as limited internet connectivity, lack of digital literacy, and cultural barriers, which have often hindered the successful implementation of technology-enabled learning solutions in developing regions (Avgerou, 2010).

Key words: Inclusive education, quality education, technology-enabled learning

Ghanaian diaspora in the digital age: politics, fracture, and fragmentation

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Abstract:

This article employs conceptual understandings of digital diaspora to explore Ghanaian migrants' complex engagement with homeland politics and developmental concerns through technological affordances, focusing on conditions of fracture and fragmentation produced through contentious political encounters in digital space. Technological advancement, improved transportation systems, global mobilities, and circuits of flows are producing diverse migrant configurations with cross-border subjectivities that span multiple localities, territories, and contexts (Alinejad et al., 2019; Bernal, 2020; Candidatu et al., 2019; Candidatu and Ponzanesi, 2022; Witteborn, 2019). These *connected migrants* (Diminescu, 2020) employ digital infrastructures to mediate their everyday activities, representational enactments, and cross-border relationalities. Aside from intensifying human relations across time and space, contemporary technological affordances are similarly transforming migrants' engagement with persistent developmental challenges in countries of origin as these migrants attempt to shape policy initiatives from afar. The increasing convergence between digital technologies and migrants' cross-border subjectivities is redefining contemporary understandings of citizenship, participation, and territoriality, producing the notion of a *digital diaspora*: migrants whose conditions and experiences are framed by the digital (Brinkerhoff, 2006; Everett, 2009; Laguerre, 2010; Bernal, 2013). These digitally empowered global citizens employ technological affordances to engage with the home country's development discourse through political engagement, involving advocacy, protests, debates, lobbying, propaganda, and diverse forms of activism. Scholarship on Ghanaian migrants' civic engagement with chronic homeland development challenges has gained currency across various disciplinary fields and specialisms (Bob-Milliar, 2019; Paller, 2019; Owusu, 2020; Agbloyor and Nsafoah, 2023).

Key words: Ghanaian diaspora, digital age, politics, fracture, and fragmentation

Integrating Sustainability Principles in Social Housing: A Catalyst for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Ghana.

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Joseph Ofori-Kuragu. (Anglia Ruskin University)

Francis Kwesi Bondinuba. (Kumasi Technical University)

Alex Opoku. (University of Sharjah)

Abstract

The housing sector is essential in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This study examines the role of sustainable social housing in achieving Ghana's 2030 agenda for sustainable development. It explores the challenges and opportunities in implementing sustainable housing initiatives and emphasises the importance of integrating sustainability principles into social housing projects. The research undertakes a comprehensive analysis of sustainable housing practices in Ghana, utilising a methodology that includes a literature review, case studies, and stakeholder interviews. These methods are employed to assess the country's current state of sustainable housing. The study reveals that integrating sustainability principles into social housing projects is crucial for addressing affordability, accessibility, and environmental impact. It highlights the significance of sustainable social housing as a catalyst for achieving several SDGs, including SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 13 (Climate action). The recommendations include the provision of appropriate policy, legal, and institutional frameworks, offering incentives to housing providers, and promoting sustainable infrastructure and social services. The study emphasises the need for good governance, availability, and accessibility to various sources of development funds for affordable housing. This paper provides recommendations for policymakers, urban planners, and housing providers on enhancing sustainability practices in the housing sector to achieve the SDGs.

Keywords: Accessibility, Affordability, Environmental impact, Ghana, Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable social housing.

2025 Conference

The next GSS conference, now known as 'The International Conference on African Development (iCAD 2025)' will be held from June 18-20, 2025, at Aston University Business School, Birmingham, UK, under the theme "Sustainable Development and Youth Employment in Africa: Challenges and Way Forward."

This conference aims to bring together academics, policymakers, and industry leaders to explore actionable strategies for solving Africa's persistent youth unemployment crisis. Proceedings will be published by the British Library and quality papers will be considered for leading academic journals. Submit your paper by March 31, 2025, and contribute to shaping Africa's future through impactful research and innovation!

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