ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AS A TOOL FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION: AN ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN UNION SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA (2014–2024)

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ENUGU STATE

MAY, 2026.

TITLE PAGE

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A PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY UGWUOMU-NIKE, ENUGU STATE, FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC) DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MAY, 2026.

DECLARATION

I, Chukwuka, Chinaecherem Onyeacholamokwu., hereby declare that this research work was written by me under the supervision of Dr. Francisca Obiageli Ifedi and to the best of my knowledge, has not been presented elsewhere for the award of degree. Therefore, the information provided is authentic.

Chukwuka, Chinaecherem Onyeacholamokwu **DATE**

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that the research project "Economic Sanctions as a Tool for Conflict Resolution: An Analysis of European Union Sanctions on Russia (2014–2024)" by Chukwuka, Chinaecherem Onyeacholamokwu, with registration number: GOU/U22/IRE/586 is adequate both in scope and quality and it is approved as it and has met the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.sc) degree in International Relations, Godfrey Okoye Universty Thinkers Corner Emene, Enugu State.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God, whose unfailing grace, wisdom, protection, and guidance sustained me throughout this academic journey and made the successful completion of this study possible. It is also dedicated to my beloved parents, Chief and Mrs. Ekeh R. Chukwuka, for their immeasurable love, sacrifices, prayers, encouragement, and unwavering support toward my education and personal growth. Their dedication and commitment to my success remain a constant source of inspiration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to God Almighty for His infinite mercy, grace, wisdom, strength, and protection throughout the course of my academic journey. His guidance and provision made the successful completion of this project possible.

My sincere and profound appreciation goes to my project supervisor, Dr. Francisca Ifedi, for her patience, academic guidance, constructive corrections, encouragement, and valuable contributions throughout the course of this research work. Her supervision and dedication greatly contributed to the success of this study.

I also express my heartfelt gratitude to the Head of Department, Professor Sam Ugwuozor, whose leadership and academic commitment have been a source of inspiration. I equally appreciate the Dean of the Faculty, Professor John Odoh, for his encouragement and support during my years of study.

My appreciation further goes to all my lecturers in the Department for the knowledge, discipline, and moral support they impacted in me throughout my academic program. I sincerely thank Dr. Mbaeze N.C., Mr. Okonkwo W.O., Dr. Amadi C., Rev. Fr. Dr. Ikenna Ogbuka, Dr. Chiedozie Alex Ogbonnia, Mr. Onyishi A., Mr. Ezechi Kingsley, Sr. Umeh Lucy C., and Mr. Ajibo Christian for their academic guidance and contributions to my intellectual development.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my beloved family members for their unwavering support, prayers, sacrifices, and encouragement. I sincerely appreciate my sister, Mrs. Chukwuka Jane Ayole, and her dear husband, Engineer Felix E. Ayole, for their immense financial and moral support throughout my academic pursuit. I also deeply appreciate Pharmacist Ruth K. Chukwuka and my brother, Engineer Chuks C. Chukwuka, for their prayers, encouragement, and steadfast support toward the success of my education.

Finally, I appreciate my friends, classmates, and colleagues who contributed directly or indirectly to the successful completion of this project. Your encouragement, support, and goodwill remain highly appreciated. May God Almighty richly bless you all.

TABLES OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Declaration Page	ii
Certification Page	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Table of Contents	vi
Abstract	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	5
1.3 Research Questions	8
1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study	8
1.5 Significance of the Study	8
1.6 Scope of the Study	9
1.7 Limitation of the Study	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Conceptual Framework	12
2.2.1 Concept of Economic Sanctions	12
2.2.2 Concept of Conflict Resolution	14
2.2.3 Concept of International Diplomacy	17
2.2.4 The Goals of Economic Sanctions in International Relations	19
2.3 Contextual Review	22

2.3.1 Historical Background of European Union–Russia Relations 22

2.3.2 Russia's Annexation of Crimea and the 2014 Sanctions 24

2.3.3 Russia-Ukraine War and the Intensification of Sanctions (2022-2024) 27

2.3.4 Responses of Russia to European Union Sanctions 29

2.4 Theoretical Review 32

2.4.1 Realist Theory 32

2.4.2 Dependency Theory 34

2.5 Empirical Review 37

2.5 Effects of European Union Economic Sanctions on Russia (2014–2024) 37

2.5.2 Influence of European Union Sanctions on the Russia–Ukraine Conflict and International Relations 38

2.5.3 The effectiveness of the European Union sanctions as a conflict resolution instrument 40

2.6 Gap in Literature 41

CHAPTER THREE:METHODOLOGY 43

3.1 Theoretical Framework 43

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study 45

3.3 Research Design 45

3.4 Method of Data Collection 45

3.5 Method of Data Analysis 46

3.6 Logical Framework 48

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS 50

4.1 European Union Economic Sanctions on Russia (2014–2024) 50

4.1.1 Nature and Categories of Sanctions Imposed on Russia 52

4.1.2 Financial and Trade Restrictions on Russia 56

2.1.3 Energy and Technology Sanctions Against Russia 58

4.2 Effects of European Union Sanctions on Russia 61

4.2.1 The impact on Russia's Economy 64

4.2.2 Effects on Russia’s Political and Diplomatic Relations 66

4.3 Economic Sanctions as a Means of Conflict Resolution 68

4.3.1 Assessment of the Effectiveness of European Union Sanctions on Russia 70

4.3.2 Impact of the Sanctions on the Russia–Ukraine Conflict 72

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 75

5.1 Summary 75

5.2 Conclusion 77

5.3 Recommendations 78

Bibliography 79-83

Abstract

One of the most important tools for intervening in international conflicts and influencing the behavior of targeted states have been economic measures, and states and international organizations have frequently seen economic sanctions as such an instrument. The sanctions subsequently issued by the EU against Russia from 2014 till 2024 have made significant headlines in the narrative of conflicts, as there are several doubts on their effectiveness as a mechanism for dispute resolution, especially in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This study emerged from the desire to delve into the character of the sanctions imposed on Russia, their economic and political repercussions, and their capacity to affect the Russia–Ukraine conflict and international relations. Certain aims of the study were the following: analysis of the impact of the EU sanctions on Russia in 2014–2024; analysis of the impact of EU sanctions on the Russia–Ukraine conflict and international relations; and assessing of economic sanctions effectiveness as conflict-resolution methods. This study was ont designed qualitatively, applying the documentary research method in collecting data. Developed secondary data is from academic journals, books, EU-reported documents, government documents, policy papers, Media-related documents, and International organizations. Liberal Institutionalism Theory was the doctrine chosen as the theoretical underpinning with a primary focus on international institutions, cooperation and mutual activities in the maintenance of international order and its impact on the behavior of state. Results have shown that the EU sanctions impacted Russia's financial markets, technology availability, trade relations, economy and diplomacy. In addition, the sanctions placed further a burden on Russia's economy and deepened the political and military backing of Ukraine by the West. The study revealed, however, that sanctions were not 100% effective in pressuring Russia to change its policies toward Ukraine; rather, Russia took a number of measures to neutralize the effects of the sanctions but also implemented some measures that increased its cooperation with non-Western powers. The study ended by highlighting the fact that while the use of economic sanctions as instruments of international diplomacy and conflict management is still relevant, it is often constrained by geopolitical interests, other economic partnerships, humanitarian issues, and the inconsistent nature of international cooperation aimed at permitting a rapid resolution of conflict. The study suggests more effective conflict resolution could be achieved via a blend of economic sanctions and diplomatic/peace building processes, and through more robust international collaboration and the implementation of targeted sanctions mechanisms.
The keywords are Economic Sanctions, European Union and Russia- Ukraine Conflict, Conflict Resolution.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Economic sanctions have become one of the most used instruments in international relations to influence a state's actions and to solve international conflicts. Sanctions are political or economic measures taken by a country or group of countries against another country that is intended to coerce that nation to respect international law or refrain from objectionable practices. Understanding economic sanctions is best achieved by considering them as intentional restraints on trade, finance, and diplomatic relations that are intended to serve foreign policy objectives in the absence of direct military engagement, writes Drezner (2021). Similarly, Portela (2022) defined economic sanctions as any measures that states or international organizations might consider to press target governments to change their political, military or economic policies. In contrast to conflictation, conflict resolution refers to a set of techniques and processes to reduce, manage or end a conflict between two states or between two nations with peaceful methods. According to Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2021), conflict resolution involves a range of diplomatic, political and economic means for returning peace and stability in a conflict. As may be seen from the increase in reliance on the use of sanctions by global powers and regional organisations, economic pressure is gaining more significance in modern international politics as an alternative to armed intervention (Biersteker, 2023).

The European Union (EU) has emerged as one of the leading regional organizations utilizing economic sanctions as part of its foreign policy and security strategy. Sanctions serve the purpose of supporting peace, upholding democratic values, deterring human rights violations and safeguarding territorial sovereignty between states within the EU framework (Portela, 2022). The EU has previously applied economic sanctions against various states, most notably Iran, North

Korea, Syria, Belarus and Russia. The sanctions imposed on Russia from 2014 to 2024, on the other hand, are among the most extensive and significant sanctions regimes in recent international relations (Portela, 2022). The sanctions were imposed in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, which is considered a part of Ukraine by all nations. In response, the EU, as well as the United States and the allies of the Western world, criticized the annexation for breaching of international law and the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine (Smith, 2021). As a result, EU has a range of these punitive measures for its officials, financial institutions as well as its energy firms and military-related industries. Later expandations of these sanctions came with Russia's major military invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 (Eze, & Ibrahim, 2024). The years 2014 to 2024 had been a significant turning point between the European Union (EU) and Russia. Prior to 2014, Russia and the EU had engaged in robust energy trade and investment, and strong cooperation on regional security, as well as other issues of shared interest (Kuzemko, 2020). European countries were trading partners of the Russian economy and Russia one of the major suppliers of natural gas and crude oil to Europe. Resentments from this situation had been exacerbated by the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in part of Ukraine and led to political tensions between the western countries and Russia. For Sakwa (2020), the Ukraine crisis brought geopolitical tension back in between Russia and the West, marking a return to a new and different phase of economic competition and political distrust. The European Union has constantly renewed and extended Russia sanctions since then, in response to ongoing military action, political developments and allegations of human rights violations in the country.

The European Union's response to Russia's sanctions included several points of restriction, seeking to erode Russia's ability to fight and continue their economic power. These include asset freezes and restrictions on Russian companies, travel bans for Russian politicians, curbs on Russian banks, restrictions on the export of technology and civil arms embargoes on Russian military equipment (Connolly, 2022). In response to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the EU extended comprehensive sanctions to the Russian energy sector, financial and payment systems, the aviation industry, and market access. After 2022, the sanctions imposed marked one of the most ambitious coordinated measures of economic pressure ever against a major such player, as Felbermayr, Mahlkow and Sandkamp (2024) stated. The restrictions further involved discontinuation of certain Russian banks from the SWIFT, international payment system, and the freezing of Russian foreign funds held overseas (Ogunyemi, 2021). These were measures which aimed to cut off Russia in terms of trade and pressure the Russian government to think again about its military action in Ukraine. These sanctions have been discussed extensively by scholars because of their impact on Russia, Europe and on the global economy. In particular, Russia lost foreign investments, saw inflation, limits on access to western technologies, and international trade relations were disrupted (Dreger, 2023). Multiple multinational firms suspended activities in Russia and there were restrictions on the import and export of goods, including for manufacturing, transportation and energy production. Russia had taken three approaches in the face of all these challenges in order to lessen the impact of the sanctions. Ahn & Ludema (2023) indicated that Russia divert related trade towards Asian and Middle Eastern markets, boosted domestic production, and enhanced economic cooperation with counties including China and India. The sanctions, meanwhile, created economic problems in Europe as well. Energy prices, inflation, and gas shortages were among the challenges that began to emerge in many European countries with an increased reliance on non-Russian energy supplies (Kuzemko, 2023). Economic sanctions of this kind have been seen to have an impact on both the economy of the country to which they are imposed and the economy of the country imposing the sanctions.

Economic sanctions as a resolution mechanism in conflict continue to be a heavily debated issue among scholars and policymakers. Some scholars believe that through the imposition of economic pressure and political pressure, sanctions are able to force the change of policy of the state. Others believe manifestations are ineffective since sanctioned countries tend to find ways to circumvent them or form alternate economic and political links. Giumelli and Ivan (2021) argue that sanctions can have a negative impact on economic performance without being politically effective, particularly when the sanctioned regime has considerable domestic control or external backing. As for Russia, it has not been deterred by sanctions with the last since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, which has led to doubt about whether economic revenge works in international disputes. According to Sakwa (2022), sanctions aggravated the relations between Russia and Western countries, not pushing them towards immediate political settlement. In spite of this, the law's advocates insist that the sanctions harmed Russia's economic potential and showed other countries that they stand with them against the international law infringements made by the Russian state. Moreover, the Russia–Ukraine crisis and sanctions imposed on the two states have caused considerable negative impact on the political and economic relations around the world. (Okeke & Adamu, 2022). The war incited continued volatility in oil and gas markets, as well as increased food costs and supply chain disruptions given Russia's importance as an oil, gas, wheat, and fertilizer exporter (Tooze, 2023). Global commodity markets were impacted, pushing developing countries mostly in Africa and some regions in Asia to higher food insecurity and inflation rates. Political realignments and shifts in international diplomacy also came from the conflict in the form of the sanctions imposed. Allison (2023) credited the sanctions regime against Russia to the wider power and security concerns, as well as uncertainties regarding the shape of international relations in the coming years. The war was thus no longer just European, but of economic and political significance all over the world.

Despite the continued sanctions, the Russia–Ukraine conflict has continued, raising concerns over the effectiveness of economic sanctions in meeting these goals of conflict resolution.

The conflict lasted during the study period as the sanctions imposed on Russia caused economic hardship for them (Adebayo, 2023). Given this situation, researchers have pondered if sanctions can be a truly effective vehicle to force the hands of key players in strategic decisions and military conflicts (Drezner, 2021). The sanctions also showed the will of EU and its allies to use non-military means in deterring aggression. So the topic of the influence of economic sanctions on the process of resolving conflicts in modern international relations would be worthy of an analysis over the 2014-2024 time period. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the effect of economic sanctions on conflict-resolution by analyzing the European Union sanctions against Russia between 2014 and 2024. The study concentrates on the nature of the punishments applied by the European Union; economic and political impact on Russia; and whether the sanctions helped to reach conflict resolution goals in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Economic sanctions as a means of settling international disputes have remained of topical interest globally, especially in contexts of international law violations, aggression over territory, and threats to global peace. The European Union, along with the United States and the rest of the western world, have enforced a number of rounds of economic sanctions against Russia since 2014, since the annexation of Crimea and further escalation of conflicts between Russia and Ukraine (Portela 2022). The sanctions included in the package were aimed at the key sectors of the Russian economy, such as banking, energy, military technology, transport and international trade (Connolly, 2022). The sanctions are designed to push Russia to "engage in constructive dialogue" over its actions in Ukraine, weaken its economy and military and "promote peaceful resolution. Yet, fighting continued from 2014 to 2024, and escalating concern over the success of economic sanctions as conflict resolution strategy (Drezner, 2021). Fried and Ukraine sanctions have so far not proved to be sufficient to force Russia to change its strategic or political course in its relationship with Ukraine. While the sanctions had an impact on Russian economy due to inflation, withering away of foreign investments, prohibition of trade and technological limitations, the military actions by Russia and political opposition to Western demands were not affected (Felbermayr, Mahlkow, & Sandkamp, 2024). Russia also established other economic relations with the countries (e.g., China, India and Iran) to minimize the effects of the sanctions (Ahn & Ludema, 2023). Sanctioned states' capacity to establish alternative financial and trade channels diminishes the anticipated impact of the sanctions and weakens their success in meeting their diplomatic aims, as per Eze and Ibrahim (2024). It has sparked doubts around the world about the ability of economic sanctions to achieve any lasting peace in a conflict between two militarily and economically strong powers.

One of the biggest issues stemming from the European Union sanctions on Russia has been the adverse impact on the economies of other European nations and the global economy in general. Russia continues to be a top exporter globally of oil, gas, wheat, fertilizers, as well as some strategic raw materials. The sanctions against Russia thus played some part in disrupting global energy supply and driving up inflation, food shortages and instability over energy markets (Tooze, 2023). The energy price and economic volatility surges resulted from blocking Russian gas imports to several European nations (Kuzemko, 2023). The impact of the conflict and the sanctions had a significant role in driving up fuel prices, inflation, transportation prices and food insecurity in developing countries like Nigeria (Adebayo, 2023). The developments raised concerns about whether these sanctions caused even more economic hardship in the world than made toward peaceful conflict resolution. Moreover, the effectiveness of the sanctions which the European Union has imposed on Russia throughout 2014-24 is not officially agreed upon by scholars. A few experts maintained that the sanctions undermined Russia's economic future and were a signal of international condemnations of aggression on the grounds (Biersteker, 2023). Others argue that the main purpose of the sanctions, to bring the conflict to an end and to force Russia out from the occupied territories, was not realised (Giumelli & Ivan, 2021). Past research also tended to be limited in scope, concentrating primarily on the economic effects of sanctions without integrating a broader perspective on the impact of sanctions on diplomacy, international security and conflict management. On its part also, several studies focused primarily on the west sided without paying enough attention to the impact of the sanctions on the economies of the developing countries or on international political relations.

The economic sanctions and international conflict resolution has received limited academic interest in Nigeria especially in the context of sanctions by the European Union against Russia. Major concerns of most studies in the nature of international economic diplomacy and sanctions policies within the academic environment in Nigeria were on domestic security challenges, terrorism, insurgency and governance issues, rather than international economic diplomacy and sanctions policies (Ogunyemi, 2021). However, there has been the omission of research on the effectiveness of non-military sanctions as a means of promoting peace and resolving international conflicts in the world's landscapes (Okeke & Adamu, 2022). Lack of adequate local studies on the matter of inflation though also limits the understanding of the impact of global political conflicts and sanctions on developing nations like Nigeria, manifesting in the form of inflation, trade interruptions and economic instability. Given that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is still raging, and that it has been going on through a series of sanctions packages, the efficacy of economic sanctions, the scope of the veto and its implications for the effectiveness of international relations in recent years have become an issue of concern. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to analyze the use of economic sanctions as an instrument of conflict resolution in the context of the sanctions against the Russian Federation by the European Union in 2014-2024. This study is dedicated to the nature of the sanctions, their economic and political impacts, and how they helped accomplish conflict resolution goals in the conflict up to this time.

1.3 Research Questions.

In view of the above mentioned issues, the following questions are asked in this study:

1. How have economic sanctions by the EU affected Russia economic activities from 2014-2024?
2. In what ways have the European Union sanctions influenced the Russia–Ukraine war from 2014 to 2024?
3. How effective have EU sanctions been in resolving Russia–Ukraine war between 2014 and 2024?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study.

The primary objective of this study is to explore economic sanction as a mechanism for conflict resolution by analyzing European Union sanctions against Russia between 2014-2024. The goals are to:

1. Examine the impact of the European Union's economic sanctions on Russia economic activities from 2014-2024.
2. Examine how the European Union sanctions influenced the Russia–Ukraine war from 2014 to 2024.
3. Critically examine how effective European Union sanctions are as a conflict resolution strategy from 2014 to 2024.

1.5 Significance of the Study.

This research is of both theoretical and practical importance. Theoretically this study will help in enriching the knowledge in the field of international relations relating with economic sanctions and its role in international conflict resolution. It will help clarify the impact of the EU sanctions over Russia starting from 2014 to the present on economic activities, diplomatic relations, politics, and international security. The research will also help in the academic debate regarding the success of economic sanctions as vital non-military means of conflict management and global peace. The study also will further the academic analysis of the impact of economic pressure, international diplomacy and the state in times of geopolitical conflict. The study will also benefit students, researchers and scholars in political science, international relation, peace and conflict studies, economics and diplomatic studies in the realms of political and economic diplomacy, sanctions and global security. It will also provide education for future research on international conflict management, regional security and economic diplomacy of the major powers.

In practice it will help the policy makers, international organizations and diplomatic institutions in the field of conflict resolution and foreign policy making. The findings will help the European Union, the United Nations and other international bodies to learn how good or bad economic sanctions are as a way of resolving international disputes. The study will also allow government agencies and policy makers to consider the wider economic and political impact of sanctions on the targeted country and on the world economy. The study will be useful for international development agencies, civil society and peacebuilding institutions in the development of diplomatic and non-military strategies for peace and stability in areas of conflict. Additionally, the study will help African nations, particularly Nigeria, grasp the impact of external conflicts and sanctions on economies in development in the face of inflation, loss of trade, energy shortages, and food insecurity. The findings will also shape the debate on international policy matters related to peace, international cooperation and sustainable economic relations in the international system between states.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The purposes of this research will be dealing with economic sanctions as a means of conflict resolution by analyzing the cases of the EU sanctions on Russia in the years 2014-2024. It will look at the nature and types of European sanctions imposed on Russia since annexation of Crimea in 2014 and since the Russia – Ukraine conflict escalated in 2022. The study will determine the effects of these sanctions upon Russian international trade, its relations with Western countries, its diplomatic policies, politics and economic activities. The research will also explore the role of the sanctions in achieving conflict resolution and international peace and security in the time frame to be examined. The findings will be analyzed in terms of the impact of these sanctions on foreign economic cooperation, energy security and international relations. Special focus will be placed on the affected major sectors such as banking, energy, tech, transportation and military. The research will also evaluate the reactions and adaptation to sanctions from Russia, primarily in the form of alternative trade connections and economic cooperation with non-Western countries. The study will take into account the international dimension of the impact of these measures, but will focus on the sanctions imposed by the E.U. and how they relate to the current Russia–Ukraine situation. The studied time frame was 2014 – 2024 as it spans from the onset of sanctions imposed by the European Union due to the seizure of Crimea by Russia until the ongoing sanctions regime following the large-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Significant political, economic and security adjustments all around the world in the conflict sphere were also experienced during this time. The study does not and should not exceed the scope of the analysis of the EU sanctions on Russia and their role in negotiations on Russia's conflict with the international community over the time frame analyzed.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This study focused on the economic sanctions instrument in the process of conflict resolution by analysing the European Union sanctions used against Russia between 2014-2024. While conducting the research, some limitations were faced. A significant problem was that secondary data (which are commonly books, journal articles, government publications, policy documents, reports from international organizations, and media publications) were used. The use of the documents resulted in the material studied being confined to information already available and tended to include the possibility of interpretation and reporting differences between different sources. One aspect was the limited availability of classified diplomatic and economic information about the European Union and Russian government's internal processes. Some policy actions and reactions relating to the sanctions were not visible in official documents or as a result of strategic talks, and were unavailable to the public for in-depth analysis of certain economic documents. Study limitations included the dynamic nature of the Russia–Ukraine conflict and international sanctions policies. The economic and political consequences were not finalised until the research was completed in 2024 and were thus still evolving between 2022 and 2024. This complicated the ability to reach definite conclusions regarding some of the longer term effects of the sanctions. The research was further restricted due to limitations of time and financial resources on the amount of materials that could be examined in detail. All this was done to ensure the credibility and reliability of the study, though there were some limitations regarding the date and relevance of the sources that were used, and their origin from academic publications, international organizations and government documents and policy documents.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed some related literature on the subject matter. The review is performed according to the following sub-headings: conceptual framework, contextual reviews, theoretical framework, empirical review and gap in literature review.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Concept of Economic Sanctions

Economic sanctions may be generally described as an instrument of foreign policy, which is implemented by the state or the international organization for the purpose of changing the behavior of the state it is aimed at. In general, the word concept refers to the measures imposed on countries to change their political, military and/or economic decisions (Ogunyemi, 2021). Hufbauer, Schott, Elliott and Oegg (2019, p.2) defined economic sanctions as purposeful withdrawal of normal trade and financial relations to make adherence to international expectations or discourage unwanted actions. Similarly, Drezner (2021) called economic sanctions "international policy instruments that place economic costs on a target state to impose strategic and/or diplomatic changes in the international environment. Such measures can encompass restrictions on trade, financial limitations, investment barriers and market-access limitations. As explained by Portela (2022), territorial aggression, violations of human rights, threats to the peace of the world are among the scenarios in which economic sanctions are often used by regional institutions, like the European Union, in order to ensure the respect of a set of international norms. With regard to the EU sanctions imposed on Russia, these were put in place to deter Russian military operations in Ukraine and to condemn the countries' actions for breaches of international law (Sopuru, 2022). Since 2014, sanctions against Russia were intended to cripple industry sectors that make up the economic power base, such as banking, energy, defense and technology to take the wind out of the sails of the Russian state and make it less likely to sustain long-term conflict, wrote Connolly (2022). This viewpoint underlines the punitive and corrective aspect of economic sanctions in international relations.

The mechanisms of economic sanctions have been outlined by Felbermayr et al. (2024) who found that they have several impact channels, such as financial sanctions, export embargoes, import vehicles, and asset freezing. These measures are aimed at breaking the economy stability in the country and forcing the political leadership to rethink its strategy. But they also stressed that the success of the sanctions relies on global cooperation, the economic strength of sanctioned country, and existence of other trade partners. Additional challenges include diverting trade relationships to other countries targeted by the sanctions, reinforcing local production, and finding workarounds to the financial system of the sanctioning countries, Ahn and Ludema (2023) have reported. The study's findings align with Biersteker's (2023) argument that economic sanctions have become an increasingly important tool of global governance in the post-Cold War international system, where military action is now applied less often. Sanctions are part of the EFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) applied by the European Union, a main global actor for the promotion of peace, stability and respect of international law. In case of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, targeted sanctions imposed on individual persons and institutions since 2014 and sectoral sanctions since 2022 (Okeke & Adamu 2022). The measures show how more and more economic instruments are being used to settle international conflict as opposed to military instruments.

But, the idea of economic sanctions involves discussion of unintended consequences and effectiveness. Giumelli and Ivan (2021) maintained that sanctions place sanctions costs on the sanctioned state, but fail to produce political compliance particularly for the sanctioned state has high level self-control or external support mechanisms. Further, Dreger (2023) noted that sanctions can not only have an economic impact on the sanctioned country, but also on the sanctioning states and global markets, due to the effect on trade, energy and financial supply. Contracting sanctions impacted on global energy prices and energy chains in the case of Russia, all engaging in energy interdependence, making it clear that economic interdependence is a significant driver of the effects of sanctions policies. According to Okeke and Adamu (2022), Economic sanction is a tool employed in international diplomacy to influence through economic means but not military engagement in the Nigerian academic world. Ogunyemi (2021) also reported that sanctions are a product of the power dynamics in global affairs, by which more powerful states or groups of states inflict economic and trade limits of others to achieve compliance with international norms. This knowledge translates to the fact that in international relations, economic sanctions are a tool employed with the purpose of controlling state actions, managing conflicts or ensuring the maintenance of order in the world (Adeleye, 2023). In this study, economic sanctions are defined as a deliberate economic and political measure undertaken by the European Union from 2014 to 2024 to compel Russia to act in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and making it possible to resolve the conflict non-militarily.

2.2.2 Concept of Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a relatively wide and complex term with peaceful resolution of disagreements, disputes and tensions between fellow individuals, groups and/or states. It is about the processes and the mechanisms whereby hostile relationships are handled so as to obtain peace, cooperation and stability. Ramsbotham et al. (2021) stated that conflict resolution is "organized efforts to address the sources of conflict and bring about peaceful coexistence among parties interested in or involved in conflict. Conceptualizing skills such as negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, arbitration, and non-violent ways of going about the process to avoid escalating conflicts. Conflict resolution also takes a spectrum where conflicting parties are able to seek to understand the root causes of their disagreements and decided on a peaceful way of resolving the conflict in a way that all parties involved reach mutually agreeable outcomes (Burton, 2020). Conflict resolution is linked with diplomacy, economic sanctions, peace-processes and international institutions addressing the maintenance of international peace and security in international relations. Based on the assertions of Nwolise (2020) conflict resolution is needed when conflicts face the political, economic and social stability or harmony of a state, or of states. In a contemporary international environment, territorial claims, political competition and military threats have made the option for peaceful methods of solving disputes more prominent. One of the most prominent contemporary instances of the application of economic and diplomatic tools to influence state behaviour and lower tension across the international community was in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the European Union sanctions on Russia (Okeke & Adamu, 2022).

Conflict resolution scholars and theorists have offered various approaches to conflict resolution through political, social or diplomatic lenses. Fisher and Ury (2019) define conflict resolution as designing solutions that can make conflicting parties' interests gratifiable while featuring not violence or coercion. They stress the need for dialogue, compromise, and cooperation, as key ingredients in promoting enduring peace. Galtung (2020) also argued that goals of conflict resolution should not just be to end conflict but also to tackle structural factors – injustice, inequality, political exclusion etc. – that can lead to conflict. The view is that sustainable peace can only be realized when there is adequate handling of the social and political sources of hostility. Communication, trust-building and a willingness of parties to engage in peaceful negotiation are also essential for successful conflict resolution (Bercovitch, 2021). When conflicts refuse to run through the diplomatic channel, some states and international organisations go into the other competitive measures like economic sanctions, embargoes, political isolation and prove pressure on the conflicting members. Drezner (2021) noted that due to the opportunity it grants states to affect behavior without going to war, economic sanctions have become an important tool in conflict resolution. In this context, the EU sanctions, which Russia faced, aimed at inducing political compliance and dissuaded behaviors seen as threats to international law and “regional stability” (Ogunyemi, 2021).

Moreover, conflict resolution is a perpetual, on-going and dynamic process; this involves collaboration and the contribution of international bodies and institutions. Akinboye and Ottoh (2021) maintained conflicts resolution is deliberately done by the government, regional organizations and international bodies to decrease conflicts and achieve peaceful coexistence. This means mediation, peacekeeping, economic pressure, humanitarian, and diplomatic actions. Other definitions of conflict resolution include the peaceful resolution of conflicts through diplomatic, political, legal, economic, religious, academic, and other strategies that do not involve violence (S. United Nations, 2022). During conflict situations, external institutions like the European Union, United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) have a significant role in the processes of negotiations and peace keeping by coordinating international actions. For Okeke and Adamu (2022), with increased resort to economic and diplomatic means in today's conflict resolution, conflicts are apt to result in humanitarian disasters, destruction and immovable instability. International cooperation, political will, economic sanctions and negotiating ability of the parties involved are among the factors that influence the effectiveness of the conflict resolution methods (Ogunyemi, 2021).

For the Russia-Ukraine war, the process of conflict resolution included diplomatic efforts, ceasefire talks, mediation efforts by various international organizations, and economic sanctions by the European Union and its members and some other countries (Uzo, 2023). The conflict, which lasted from 2014 to 2024, however, has shown how complicated a matter it was to settle a dispute between the powerful states with conflicting political and strategic agendas. But these sanctions were intended to undermine Russia's economic power and help to appease the war through non-military means, Okafor (2019) pointed out. However, failure to end the conflict brought doubts into economic sanctions' ability to be effective tools of conflict resolution. Thus, "conflict resolution" is nothing but a comprehensive negotiating process that may involve diplomatic, political, economic, and institutional attempts to lower tension, mediate disputes, and facilitate peaceful coexistence between the conflicting parties in the international system.

2.2.3 Concept of International Diplomacy

International diplomacy is a key principle of international relations, dealing with the use of diplomacy, discussion, negotiation, representation, peaceful engagement to manage relations between states. It is very important because it became a powerful tool that countries could use in their foreign policies, to realize their national objectives and to save themselves from having such and such experiences in the international arena (Odoh, 2021). International diplomacy is defined by the way countries conduct themselves in dealing peacefully with each other without causing conflict and encouraging cooperation, according to Bull (2019). On the other hand, according to Nicolson (2020), diplomacy is a discourse and negotiation process with governments to manage negotiations for the solution of conflicts and for political-economical and strategic goals to be reached without use of force. In this regard, Diplomacy plays a pivotal role for the sake of International peace and stable situation. A modern context for diplomacy in Global politics today can be attributed to the increasing interdependence and presence of international outreach bodies like European Union, and United Nations (Okeke, 2021). Various attempts have been made to explain international diplomacy in different ways, taking into account the different nature of international politics. For Morgenthau (2019), diplomacy would be regarded as necessary parts of their statecraft to pursue their country's interests without needless military confrontation. As such, diplomacy serves as a balancing instrument in the international arena and a tool for international order. Similarly, Akinboye (2020) claimed the essence of diplomacy is the process of using dialogue, persuasion and negotiation to solve disagreements and create understanding among states. He believed good diplomacy will diminish the risk of war and promote nations to do things nicely with each other. Some other activities undertaken by international diplomats include mediation, treaty negotiation, economic agreements, peace conferences, and more, all with the ultimate goal of promoting international relations between states (Eze, 2022). For the Russia–Ukraine conflict, on the one hand, the diplomatic process included the stakeholders from the European Union, the UN, the United States and other international participants who are working towards a peaceful solution using dialogue and coordinated international responses (Uzo, 2023).

In addition, international diplomacy is linked in the mind of the average person to protection of the country's interests in the international arena and the way the foreign policy is implemented. Nwolise (2021) argues that diplomacy offers states peaceful ways to manage international conflicts as well as work towards their strategic goals. It facilitates negotiation of an agreement on trade, security and political cooperation to help a country develop and ensure global stability. Other tools through which states influence each other include international diplomacy, economic measures like embargoes and sanctions and international negotiations (Okafor & Ibrahim, 2022). Diplomacy is not simply the relationship between the State and State anymore, it is also the relationship between regional/regional organizations, multi-national institutions and non-state actors in global affairs in modern international relations as called for by Eze (2022). Diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions, for example, are some of the tools that the European Union increasingly uses to deal with international conflicts and to ensure compliance with international law (Portela 2022). The international system has various types of diplomacies. Traditional diplomacy can be defined as forms of diplomacy in which government representatives sit directly to negotiate, while multilateral diplomacy entails more than one government or international organization that gets engaged in the negotiation process, making decisions (Nnanna, 2021). Multilateral Diplomacy has been seen as gaining more prominence in recent years, as a result of globalization and other transnational/transborder issues like armed conflicts, migration, climate change and terrorism, according to Adeniran (2020). Other current concepts in international relations are preventive diplomacy, economic diplomacy and shuttle diplomacy. Imobighe (2019) stated that the Economic Diplomacy is the application of economic policies and mechanisms for political purposes and in sustaining international influence. That's what has been visible in the EU's actions implementing sanctions on Russia from 2014 to 2024. The sanctions imposed were political and economic actions that were incentive to stop the aggression of military attacks on Ukraine and push for peaceful resolution of the Russia–Ukrainia dispute (Ogunyemi, 2021).

International diplomacy also plays a vital role in fostering peace and cooperation in the world and averting potential conflict. Diplomacy is one of the most powerful tools to help avoid violent conflict and keep the world secure, said the United Nations (2022). Diplomatic engagement can make it possible for two states to settle their issues peaceably, enhance international collaboration, and decrease tensions that pose threats to the world's stability. But diplomacy can be undermined in other instances when the participants refuse to negotiate peace terms, or when geopolitical considerations dim all peaceful negotiation. Diplomatic moves to address the situation of the Russia/Ukraine conflict were undertaken while the conflicts and the economic sanctions unfolded, as the conflict of this era is complicated (Okeke & Adamu, 2022). But diplomats are still a key force in the realm of promoting peaceful coexistence and in dispute resolution within the international system. International diplomacy may therefore be defined in terms of managing international relation, multiple negotiations, dialogues, peaceful engagement by states, international organisations and global actors in order to serve national interests, ensure peaceful international relations and solve the conflicts without using military force..

2.2.4 The Goals of Economic Sanctions in International Relations..

In international relations, economic sanctions are considered to be intentional measures adopted by a State or International Organisation against the behaviour of another State without needing to resort to force. They are created to shape some aspects of a political, economic and security outcome in the world system. Sanctions are means to change the strategic calculus of a targeted country, by raising the price of undesirable actions while providing rewards for desirable actions, Drezner (2021) writes. The experience of the sanctions experience also underscores that the goal of sanctions is, depending on the nature of the conflict, to realize coercion, deterrence, punishment and policy change (Hufbauer, Schott, Elliott and Oegg, 2019). One of the key aims of economic sanctions is to exert pressure to change policy. It encompasses compelling a State, which can lead to changing or revoking actions that are considered to be in violation of international law or international norms. Kaempfer and Lowenberg (2019) claimed that sanctions are designed to "harden" certain policies to the point that some political leaders would consider changing, and would make it harder to resist policies, by the imposition of hardship. The sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union (EU) in the context of the Russia- Ukraine conflict were meant to impact Russia's military and political options on Ukraine (Uzo, 2023). The aim is to make it easier to be non-conforming than it is to be conforming to the policy. The other major goal is to provide deterrence – to stop future violations of international norms. Sanctions are meant as a warning sign to other countries that they will be subject to harsh economic sanctions if they do the same, Morgan, Bapat, and Kobayashi (2020) said. In addition, that deterrence is achieved as states develop alternatives to their conduct based on the threat of economic and political costs they experience at the hands of other states, Baldwin (2020) explained. This is one of the aims of world peace and the desire to say no to violence and illegal activity.

The second function of economic sanctions is punishment. Elliott and Hufbauer (2020) pointed out that sometimes sanctions are imposed for the violation of international conventions, for aggression or for the threat of peace to the world. The sanctions' punitive nature is designed to make the targeted state pay the costs it incurs in the economy and politics in a retaliatory fashion.

This will assist in legitimating international institutions and in improving the compliance with international norms. The sanctions against a state are also meant to weaken its economic and military capabilities. The imposition of constraints to financial systems, tech and trade jeopardizes the ability of a country to continue military operations and keep its economy stable, explained Portela (2022). Examples of sanctions that were imposed on Russia have issues regarding energy, banking and defense, etc. to stop their capacity to work in the ongoing war against Ukraine (Connolly, 2022). This goal is directly related to the resources at the state's disposal for continuing the conflict. Restriction of a state's diplomatic and economic relations with the rest of the world, or international isolation, is another objective. Isolation diminishes a country's role in the world and the capacity to establish strategic ties, according to Frye (2021). There is a close interlinkage between economic and diplomatic isolation, so they tend to come together in order to generate more pressure on the target government and to confine its use of international networks of support.

Sanctions can also be used as a form of disapproval of an action or a policy. The symbolic nature of the sanctions indicates to the world what the international community thinks of the country's actions such as territorial aggression, human rights violation, or breach of international law, said Nwankwo (2022). However, while sanctions may not immediately affect behaviour, they are a statement of condemnation against the chosen behaviour. Furthermore, economic sanctions are utilized to serve that purpose of promoting peace and security in the region of the world. Drezner (2021) mentioned that sanctions are often as a method of combating escalation in conflict that will not result in military engagement. The region' sanctions are imposed by the region, such as the European Union, alongside the United Nations (United Nations, 2022), in the interest of de-escalating the situation in a conflict and building peace and calm. This objective will help to realize the overall mission of reducing the insecurity in the world. Sanctions may also serve as a weapon to coerce the other side into the bargaining table and as such, is also included in the list. From the other side of the coin, sanctions also serve as a bargaining tool, as they raise the opportunity cost of war, as Hufbauer et al. (2019) argue. This is making diplomacy more attractive as a mechanism to resolve conflicts. The development of economic sanctions in international politics, in general, has the following goals: influencing the process of change in policies, discouraging further aggression of the individual, penalizing actions of the latter, undermining its potential, separation from society, disaversion of actions, maintenance of peace and assistance in diplomacy. These goals illustrate the metamorphosis of the instrument of state action in the international system — sanctions — from the purposes of conflict management to the purpose of regulation..

2.3 Contextual Review.

The present chapter will discuss how the EU (2014–2024) utilized economic sanctions as a tool for foreign policy in dealing with the escalating Russia–Ukraine war and the consequences of using these in international peace and conflict management.

2.3.1 Historical Background of European Union–Russia Relations..

European Union (EU) and Russia's relationship has been one of cooperation and competition as well as growing tensions, influenced primarily by political, economic and security issues. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, both tried to seek some rapprochement with their point of view, in all things and for stabilization of the continent. Smith (2020) noted that EU–Russia relations in the early stage of relations were marked by partnership contracts emphasizing trade cooperation, energy supplies, and political discussions. In this time, Russia was regarded as a key player in European energy security, and the EU was considered a significant consumer of Russian goods, such as energy.In this period, the EU was perceived as a great market for Russian goods, especially energy, and Russia was regarded as a key player in European energy security (Portela, 2022). These tensions started to surge from the early 2000s, as Poles and Hungarians grew less on board with NATO's expansionist policy, matters of democratic control and influence in Eastern Europe, etc. matter. They pointed out that the EU was promoting democratic reform and integration in the former Soviet states, and they felt that the EU's Eastward expansion posed a threat to the security interests of Russia, who saw an expansionist attempt by the bloc to take place at their expense (Buzan and Wæver 2019). The politics of this split upset both and led to uneasiness and distrustfulness. This worsened even more after the conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008 that marked Russia's readiness to use its military forces in adjacent regions (Fawcett, 2020).

Since the annexation of the Crimea in 2014, an important turning point in the EU–Russia relationship has been reached. This event was the first in a series of European Union-Economic and diplomatic penalties of Russia due to cooperation to confrontation, by according to Bretherton and Vogler (2019). The sanctions have been designed to hit specific Russian businesses, banks and individuals. The shift brought EU–Russia relations into a "managed environment of conflict," characterized by economic "coercion" and political "pressure," over partnership, Drezner says (2021). Worse, the situation worsened between the years 2014-2024, likely because of the intensification of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. When an invasion occurs, explains Tocci (2020), EU member states respond collectively and expand the sanctions on energy exports, their financial instrument operations, defense industries and technology transfers. Connolly (2022) reported that such actions marked a huge shift in economic activity between both and the patterns of global energy and trade. The EU, following the approach of establishing a European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy, agreed to take coordinated action that would economically and diplomatically cut off Russia and offer political and financial support to Ukraine..

Russia in defense, soon took steps that only increased Russia's separation from them. Frye (2021) noted Russia activated "counter-sanctions," curbed imports from European countries, and boosted commercial ties with third parties, like China and India, not included in U.S. sanctions. This move was a tactical move to cut reliance on Western economics and to look for alternatives to trade as well. Smith (2020) further comprehended that these emerged as a more divided world, seeing an economic system become more polarized over time. Much emphasis was still placed on energy cooperation, which also proved to be a major point of contention in the EU–Russia relations in the given time frame. Heads of state from both Russia and the EU have repeatedly declared a determination to sever Russian gas imports from Europe, a determination that was impeded by the fact that the EU was dependent on Russian energy, as pointed out by Elliott and Hufbauer (2020). The EU was pushing for diversification of energy sources in order to lessen its reliance on Russia but Russia stuck to energy export as a tool of its foreign policy. According to Portela (2022), the relationship was very sensitive to political tension and external shocks due to this fact. The foundations of EU-Russia relations by 2024 have been endmarked primarily by sanctions, isolationism and conflicting geopolitical interests. When it comes to dialogue and long-term cooperation, Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter (2019) detailed how the trust was lost on both sides, which made this difficult. This dynamic changed from partnership to strategic competition, due to different visions of security in Europe and of the international security system. The EU-Russia relationship evolved in a variety of ways, from collaboration in the 1990s, to tensions and crises in the 2000s, to renewed cooperation in the 2010s, and to confrontation in the 2020s.This process was fuelled by a combination of geopolitical differences, security concerns and economic interdependence..

2.3.2 Russia's Annexation of Crimea and the 2014 Sanctions..

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a pivotal moment in global politics between Russia, Ukraine, and the West. The crisis started in February 2014 when the government and leadership of Ukraine was altered during the events of the Maidan Revolution, with Russia considering favoring their Ukrainian military interests behind Maia Kobelik, the candidate who lost the election.The crisis began following the events of the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine, where Viktor Yanukovych was removed from the presidency in February 2014 due to political conflicts, which Russia viewed as a threat to their interests in the region, including military interests, headed by the candidate who lost the presidential election, Maia Kobelik. (Smith, 2020) Once the political transition in Ukraine was—slightly after it—Russia's military forces entered the territory of Crimea, the area that is part of Ukraine but has been internationally recognized as strategically significant, because Russia has a Black Sea naval base in Sevastopol, Ukraine. (Portela, 2022) The annexation followed a controversial referendum on 16 March 2014 that Western countries and international organizations denounced as illegal under international law, Connolly (2022) wrote. The event led to a wide-spread diplomatic crisis and relations between Russia and the European Union were negatively impacted. The EU and other of the countries surrounding Russia retaliated with sanctions designed to bring Russia to its knees by demanding that it rectify its policies and abide the Ukrainian territorial boundaries. Drezner (2021) pointed out that the sanctions imposed on the global actor in 2014 were one of the "most coordinated economic measures ever taken by the Western powers" in recent history. Initially sanctioned were Russian political authorities, military officials, and people accused of supporting the annexation, via travel restrictions and asset freezes (Frye, 2021). That was followed by general sanctions on Russian banks, its energy, defense, and technology industries (Elliott & Hufbauer, 2020).

The EU's measures were taken under Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), through which the EU member states agreed to individual restrictive measures against Russia. Bretherton and Vogler (2019) indicated that the sanctions would serve to make it harder for Russia to build up its economic power, and also to demonstrate public and political condemnation of its aggressive expansionism in the region. The EU also limited diplomatic cooperation with Russia in several spheres and limited the access to European financial markets for the major banks and companies of the country (Tocci, 2020). An impact of these restrictions was upon investment flows, trade relations and economic cooperation between Russia and European countries. In reaction, Russia imposed counter-sanctions which further exacerbated the economic and diplomatic clashes. As a countermeasure to Western sanctions against Russia, agricultural products and food items from countries within the European Union (EU) were banned from being imported (Connolly 2022). The Russian state also implemented measures to increase its own production and dependence on the West's products and financial services (Frye, 2021). This reaffirmed shifts in trade and prompted the Russians to develop economic ties with countries beyond the Western bloc, especially with the economies in Asia, and China in particular (Buzan & Wæver, 2019).

The sanctions of 2014 had a negative impact on the Russian economy and on the international economy as well. Elliott and Hufbauer (2020) noted financial constraints imposed by Western financial institutions and sophisticated technology on investments and the growth of targeted industries including energy and defence. At the same time, changes in the value of oil in the global market increased the financial burden on Russia (Portela 2022). But for others, the sanctions were not enough to force the withdrawal of Russia from Crimea, so there were concerns about how effective economic sanctions were in overall political goals (Drezner, 2021). The sanctions contributed to worsening of the relations between the European Union and Russia. According to Smith (2020), diplomatic contacts decreased and distrust and geopolitical tensions grew, both across Europe. The crisis also led to an escalation of NATO military efforts in Eastern Europe, with a number of European countries augmenting and deepening defense cooperation, in reaction to security concerns in the region (Tocci, 2020). These developments saw the Crimea affair evolve into a wider affair of security, economy and diplomacy. The annexation of Crimea and the sanctions imposed in 2014 in response to it thus set the tone for an extended period of conflict between Russia and Ukraine that continued through the coming decade. European Union sanctions were a substantial application of economic sanctions as a policy tool for affecting state behaviour outside of the military arena. The conflict, however, was so far lasting having shown that the application of sanctions as a means of dispute resolution between great powers with conflicting geopolitical interests cannot be simplified (Uzo, 2023)..

2.3.3 Russia-Ukraine War and the Intensification of Sanctions (2022-2024)..

In February 2022, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine took a new turn as the Russians attempted a military invasion of Ukraine, thus sparking one of the largest geopolitical crises for Europe since the end of the Cold War. This invasion has left devastation in its wake, causing humanitarian displacement and intense diplomatic tensions between Russia and the West (Baldwin, 2022). The war changed the nature of the regional conflict into a wider international security crisis, having a wider impact on the political and economic stability of the world as per Smith (2023). Similarly, Okonkwo (2022) said, the invasion sparked further concerns about the potential for continued instability in Europe and the issue of international law and the country's sovereignty being violated. To date, the EU has hardened its sanctions on Russia, in a series of coordinated economic, financial, diplomatic and energy-related measures, in reaction to the invasion. The sanctions launched during 2022-2024 constituted the "largest sanctions EU has ever applied to a major world powers,", explains Portela (2022). These measures included those against Russia's banking system, foreign reserves, defense industries, aviation and maritime activities, and access to advanced technology (Connolly, 2023). Ezeh (2023) believes that the sanctions were to hobble Russia's economic strength and reduce its military funding in Ukraine. The restriction imposed on the Russian financial institutions was one of the important developments of this period. Cross-border payment of transactions became a bigger challenge as several Russian banks were banned from joining the SWIFT international payments system (Frye, 2022). Adeola (2023) indicated that the financial limitations has dramatically limited Russia's access to capital markets, as well as its businesses interactions with the international community. Russian law enforcers also froze assets of the country's political elite, government officials, and businessmen involved in the war. (Drezner, 2022) They were designed to make tougher blow in the economic and political life of influential people in Russia.

The energy sector was added to the list of sectors for heightened sanctions. In an attempt to diminish one of Russia's largest sources of cash, the European Union placed restrictions on Russian oil imports and cut down on reliance on Russian gas imports (Ibrahim 2024). Additionally, EU banned exportation of technology and equipment needed for oil refining and oil production (energy generation) (Elliott & Hufbauer, 2022). These, however, imposed economic difficulties on European countries with increasing energy costs and supply chain(s) disruptions. According to Nnadozie (2023), the sanctions added to the inflation and the rising price of energy for several European economies. Intensification of sanctions also included restrictions on trade and transportation. The EU banned Russian planes from entering its airspace and placed restrictions on the entry of Russian vessels into ports (Tocci, 2023). These transportation sanctions resulted in disruption of international transport activities as well as a drop in Russia's trade with European countries as reported by Chinedu (2022). Export restrictions also renewed restrictions on other more sophisticated technologies – semiconductors, aircraft and military products and equipment – with the aim of restricting Russia's access to essential industrial inputs (Baldwin, 2022). There was further deterioration of relations between Russia and the European Union during this time. As the embassies shrank their operations and political dialogue declined, diplomat's engagements were curtailed, Adebisi (2023) noted. The EU continued to support Ukraine, providing humanitarian aid, military support, and political cooperation, and Russia characterized sanctions as tools of "economic warfare" waged by the West (Fawcett, 2022). This further exacerbated geopolitical rift and tensions between Russia and its western partners like NATO and the European Union.

The sanctions also had major economic ramifications. Obasi (2024) noted that food security in the world and in developing nations, which are reliant on wheat, was impacted by the flow of grain imports being disrupted from Russia and Ukraine. Global markets saw fuel prices and inflation rise, meanwhile, global investors were grappling with uncertainties arising from geopolitical tensions (Morgan & Bapat, 2022). That's illustrated by these growth trends: sanctions on a major world economy can have repercussions outside targeted countries. The conflict went on, despite the tightened economic sanctions from 2022 to 2024, thereby sparking discussion as to the efficiency of economic sanctions for conflict resolutions. Portela (2022) asserted that despite some sanctions already having a negative impact on the Russian economy, they offered not the immediate end to military activities nor did they immediately create political compromises. Russia responded to sanctions by extending its trade ties to third countries like China, India and Turkey and is making numerous adjustments in its economy to lessen reliance on Western systems (Okafor, 2024). This period between 2022 and 2024 is thus the beginning of a huge escalation of the Russia–Ukraine conflict and the European Union's sanctions against Russia. The sanctions were part of a coordinated response to exercise economic pressure as a non-military tool to change state behaviour and to uphold international norms..

2.3.4 Responses of Russia to European Union Sanctions..

Russia has implemented a number of economic, political and diplomatic initiatives in response to the sanctions imposed by the European Union since 2014 and until today. The following were the responses given to mitigate the effects of the sanctions on the Russian economy, to rigidly safeguard national interests and the political stability within the country. In the Russian opinion, the sanctions were part of a Western joint effort to cut back Russia's influence in the world and taint its strategic matters (according to Sakwa 2021). In the same way, Egbue (2022) reported that the Russian government acted by developing countermeasures to build its economic independence and less reliance on western markets and financial systems. The first actions that Russia took were the imposition of counter-sanctions on the member states of the European Union.

Russia banned the importation of agricultural products, food and other goods from those of the countries that joined the sanctions regime (Connolly, 2022). Akinola (2023) have indicated that these punitive actions had a negative impact on European exporters, but had a positive impact on Russia's domestic agriculture. Regarding industries, the Russian government adopted import substitution policies, which were designed to stimulate local industries and to raise the domestic production potential, by reducing reliance on foreign products (Roberts, 2021). Russia, too, had resorted to financial measures to mollify the impact of such restrictions on its banking and monetary systems. To create alternative payment systems, macro-financial and implement other measures to attract domestic investment, the Russian government strengthened its domestic financial infrastructure, which included reducing foreign currency use in international transactions, as noted by Mgbeoji (2022). The Central Bank of Russia added foreign currency reserves and broadened the list of country that uses the Russian currency in trade obligations towards friendly states (Frye, 2022). These measures were designed to counteract 'coalition-sanctioned financial instability' to Russia's economy as a result of sanctions and restrictions on international banking operations.

Yet another component was in the expansion of economic relations with non-Western countries. In order to alleviate the economic sanctions, Russia expanded its trade and diplomacy with China, India, Iran and Turkey (Yusuf 2024). However, energy exports to Asian markets have risen sharply since the turn of the tide in Russian gas and oil deliveries to Europe (Hill & Gaddy, 2021). The change of economic policy allowed Russia to continue generating export revenues despite the limitations placed by E.U. countries. In response to export restrictions imposed by Western countries, the Russian government also stepped up efforts to develop the country's industrial and technological base. Okafor (2023) attributed the increased investments in local manufacturing, technology production and defense industries to Russian sanctions, which sought to curtail the importation of advance technology. Nevertheless, a number of sectors experienced difficulties in the areas of access to foreign technology and partnerships abroad (Baldwin, 2022). Nevertheless, the Russians were determined to lessen their reliance on the West and its technology. Russia diplomatically dismissed the legality of the EU sanctions and pointed out that the sanctions by the west are aimed at certain hostile political interests. Udeh (2022) reported that Russia's authorities had all along insisted that the sanctions were uncalled for because they were grossly unfair and aimed to isolate Russia politically and economically. Despite efforts to boost political contact with Russia by several European states, diplomatic ties were strained, with diplomats expelled and embassies limited in their political activity; Tsygankov, 2021). Alongside, within the context of its foreign policy reset, Russia also boosted its cooperation with international organizations and regional non-Western pacts, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The sanctions period also witnessed changes in Russia’s internal political environment. Adamu (2023) reported that the Russian state deployed a nationalistic narrative through its media to rally domestic backing and make the sanctions appear not to be against Russia, but against its sovereignty. The strategy was partly political, as it kept the population from renouncing government policies during difficult economic times resulting from sanctions and inflation. Also, the government has increased its role in economic activities in the strategic fields to control the consequences of restrictions on the economy (Petrov, 2022). Russia's answers resulted in complex economic and political results. Sanctions drove inflation up, foreign investment down and affected Russia's economic certainty, but Russia's adjustment measures kept events from destroying the entire economy (Olowu, 2024). Russia showed strong economic resilience by diversifying its trading partners, making policy changes, and providing greater government backing to key industries, all of which kept the Russian economy vibrant, said Connolly (2022). Long-term challenges, however, loomed in the fields of technological progress and international investment and integration of global financial markets. Thus, over the last ten years (from 2014 to 2024), the actions taken by Russia in response to sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) have consisted of a mix of economic restructuring, diplomatic effort, trade diversification, and domestic policy shifts. These reactions were indicative of Russia's absolute resolve to resist the economic sanctions imposed from abroad and secure its strategic and political aims in the international arena....

2.4 Theoretical Review

2.4.1 Realist Theory

Realist Theory was propounded by Hans Morgenthau in 1948 through his work *Politics Among Nations*, although its foundations can be traced to earlier scholars such as Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes. The theory emerged from the belief that international politics is characterized by competition, struggle for power, and the pursuit of national interest among sovereign states. Realism developed strongly after the Second World War as scholars sought to explain the causes of war, political rivalry, and the continuous struggle for dominance within the international system. The theory argues that states operate in an anarchic international environment where there is no central authority capable of enforcing peace and security. As a result, states depend primarily on their own power, military capability, and strategic alliances for survival and protection. The central position of Realist Theory is that power and national interest determine the behaviour of states in international relations. According to the theory, states are rational actors that pursue policies aimed at protecting territorial integrity, political sovereignty, and economic interests. Realism maintains that cooperation among states is often temporary because countries primarily seek advantages that strengthen their position within the international system. The theory further argues that conflict is inevitable because states compete for power, influence, resources, and security. In this struggle, stronger states attempt to dominate weaker ones, while weaker states seek alliances or strategies capable of protecting their survival. Realist Theory therefore views international politics as a continuous contest shaped by national interest, military strength, and strategic calculations.

The theory is useful for understanding the behaviour of major powers within global politics. Realists argue that states use military force, economic pressure, diplomatic influence, and strategic alliances to protect national interests and expand geopolitical influence. International organizations and institutions are viewed as instruments that powerful states use to pursue their objectives rather than neutral bodies capable of guaranteeing global peace. The theory explains why states often prioritize national security above international cooperation or moral considerations. In situations involving territorial disputes, military threats, and political rivalry, states are likely to adopt aggressive measures aimed at protecting strategic interests and maintaining balance of power within the international system. In the Russia–Ukraine conflict, Realist Theory helps explain the actions of both Russia and Western countries between 2014 and 2024. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and subsequent military actions in Ukraine can be understood as attempts to protect strategic security interests and maintain regional influence within Eastern Europe. From the realist perspective, Russia viewed the expansion of Western institutions such as NATO and the European Union toward Eastern Europe as threats to its national security and geopolitical position. Consequently, Russia adopted military and political measures aimed at preventing the loss of influence in neighbouring territories considered important to its strategic interests. The theory also explains the response of the European Union and its Western allies to Russia's actions. The sanctions imposed on Russia represented attempts by Western powers to weaken Russia economically and limit its political and military influence within Europe. Realism argues that states often use economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and strategic alliances as instruments for advancing national interests and countering rival powers without direct military confrontation. The coordinated sanctions by the European Union, United States, and allied countries therefore reflected broader geopolitical competition between Russia and Western powers within the international system.

Furthermore, Realist Theory explains why international cooperation during the Russia–Ukraine conflict remained limited despite diplomatic negotiations and peace discussions. The persistence of the conflict between 2014 and 2024 demonstrates the realist argument that states prioritize survival and strategic interests above collective international goals. Both Russia and Western countries continued to pursue policies aimed at strengthening their positions rather than making concessions capable of reducing tensions completely. The conflict also revealed the limitations of international institutions such as the United Nations in resolving disputes involving major global powers with competing interests. The theory is relevant to this study because it provides a framework for understanding the political and strategic motivations behind the European Union sanctions against Russia. Realist Theory explains how states and international actors use economic sanctions as instruments for protecting geopolitical interests, maintaining balance of power, and influencing the behaviour of rival states. The theory also helps explain the persistence of the Russia–Ukraine conflict despite diplomatic efforts and international pressure. The application of Realist Theory to this study therefore lies in its ability to explain the relationship between power politics, economic sanctions, and conflict management within international relations between 2014 and 2024..

2.4.2 Dependency Theory

Dependency Theory was propounded by scholars such as Andre Gunder Frank, Raul Prebisch, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and Samir Amin in the 1960s and 1970s as a critique of modernization theories that claimed all nations could achieve development through Western-style industrialization and capitalism. The theory emerged mainly from Latin American scholarship during a period when many developing countries remained economically weak despite political independence from colonial rule. Dependency theorists argued that the global economic system is structured in a way that benefits developed nations while keeping developing nations economically dependent and underdeveloped. According to the theory, wealthier countries dominate global trade, finance, technology, and industrial production, while poorer countries remain dependent on them for capital, manufactured goods, and economic survival. The central position of Dependency Theory is that the international economic system is divided into “core” and “peripheral” states. Core states are economically advanced countries that control global production, finance, and technology, while peripheral states are less developed countries that depend heavily on the core for investment, trade, and industrial products. The theory argues that this unequal relationship allows developed countries to benefit economically at the expense of weaker economies. Peripheral states often export raw materials and import finished products, creating conditions that weaken local industries and limit economic independence. Dependency theorists maintain that underdevelopment in many countries is not a natural condition but a result of historical exploitation, unequal trade relations, and external economic domination.

Dependency Theory also explains how political and economic decisions made by powerful countries and international institutions can significantly affect weaker economies. According to the theory, global economic structures create unequal relationships where stronger nations possess the capacity to influence the political and economic conditions of weaker states through trade policies, financial control, sanctions, and diplomatic pressure. Developing nations often become vulnerable to economic shocks, debt crises, inflation, and external political influence because of their dependence on foreign markets and international financial systems. The theory therefore views international economic relations as systems of inequality that favor powerful industrialized nations. In the Russia–Ukraine conflict, Dependency Theory helps explain the economic dimensions of the sanctions imposed by the European Union and its allies against Russia between 2014 and 2024. The sanctions targeted Russia’s access to international financial systems, foreign investment, technology imports, and global markets. These measures demonstrated how economically powerful states and institutions can use their influence within the global economic system to pressure other countries politically and economically. Through restrictions on banking systems, energy exports, trade relations, and technology transfers, the European Union attempted to weaken Russia's economic capacity and reduce its international influence.

The theory is also useful in explaining the wider global effects of the sanctions on developing economies. Many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America experienced rising inflation, food shortages, fuel price increases, and disruptions in supply chains due to the sanctions and the ongoing Russia–Ukraine war. Developing countries that depended heavily on Russian wheat, fertilizer, oil, and energy supplies faced economic difficulties during the sanctions period. Dependency Theory argues that weaker economies often suffer the consequences of conflicts and economic decisions made by powerful nations because they remain integrated into global economic structures controlled by advanced industrial states. Furthermore, Dependency Theory explains the growing efforts by some countries to reduce dependence on Western-controlled economic systems. During the sanctions period, Russia expanded economic cooperation with countries such as China, India, Iran, and several Middle Eastern states in an attempt to reduce reliance on European and American markets. Alternative payment systems, energy partnerships, and regional trade agreements became part of strategies aimed at reducing vulnerability to Western economic pressure. These developments reflect the dependency theorist argument that countries often seek greater economic independence when existing global structures expose them to external control and economic manipulation. The theory is relevant to this study because it provides a framework for understanding how economic sanctions operate within unequal international economic relations. Dependency Theory explains how powerful countries and regional organizations such as the European Union can use economic instruments to influence the political behaviour of other states. It also helps explain the economic vulnerability of states heavily connected to global financial and trade systems. The application of Dependency Theory to this study therefore lies in its ability to explain the relationship between global economic power, international dependence, and the use of economic sanctions during the Russia–Ukraine conflict between 2014 and 2024..

2.5 Empirical Review

The empirical review of this study is derived from previous scholarly works related to economic sanctions, conflict resolution, international diplomacy, and the European Union sanctions imposed on Russia between 2014 and 2024.

2.5.1 Effects of European Union Economic Sanctions on Russia (2014–2024)

Adebisi (2019) conducted a study titled *Economic Sanctions and Russia's Financial Stability after the Crimea Crisis*. The study examined the economic consequences of European Union sanctions on Russia following the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Using a descriptive research design and secondary data from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Russian Central Bank reports, the study found that the sanctions contributed to currency depreciation, decline in foreign investment, and reduced economic growth in Russia. The study concluded that sanctions weakened several sectors of the Russian economy, especially banking and energy. The study is relevant to the present research because it provides evidence on the economic effects of sanctions imposed by the European Union.

Nwankwo (2021) conducted a study on *Energy Sanctions and Economic Restructuring in Russia*. The study focused on the effects of restrictions placed on Russian oil and gas exports by the European Union. Using secondary data analysis and energy market reports, the study found that sanctions reduced revenue generated from energy exports and forced Russia to seek alternative markets in Asia and the Middle East. The study concluded that energy sanctions significantly altered Russia's economic and trade relations globally. The findings are relevant because they demonstrate the strategic role of energy sanctions in international politics.

Drezner (2022) examined *Economic Coercion and State Behaviour in Contemporary International Relations*. The study aimed to determine whether sanctions influence the political and economic behaviour of targeted states. Employing comparative analysis involving Russia, Iran, and North Korea, the study found that sanctions created economic difficulties but did not always produce immediate political compliance. The study concluded that sanctions are more effective when supported by strong international cooperation and sustained diplomatic pressure. This study is important to the present work because it evaluates the broader effectiveness of sanctions within international relations.

Ogunleye and Ibrahim (2023) conducted a study titled *European Union Sanctions and Inflationary Trends in Russia*. The study examined the relationship between sanctions and rising inflation in Russia between 2014 and 2022. Using econometric analysis and inflation data obtained from the Russian Federal Statistics Service, the study revealed that sanctions disrupted supply chains, reduced imports, and contributed to rising commodity prices within Russia. The authors concluded that sanctions weakened consumer purchasing power and increased economic hardship among citizens. The study supports the current research by identifying domestic economic effects of sanctions.

2.5.2 Influence of European Union Sanctions on the Russia–Ukraine Conflict and International Relations

Afolayan (2019) conducted a study titled *Economic Sanctions and Diplomatic Relations in the Russia–Ukraine Crisis*. The study examined how European Union sanctions influenced diplomatic relations between Russia and Western countries after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Using a descriptive research design and secondary data from European Union policy documents, the study found that sanctions increased diplomatic tensions between Russia and Western powers while strengthening political cooperation among European Union member states. The study concluded that sanctions significantly reshaped international relations within Europe. This study is relevant to the present research because it explains the diplomatic implications of sanctions during international conflicts.

Eze and Chukwu (2021) conducted a research on European Union Foreign Policy and the Russia – Ukraine Conflict. One of the objectives of the study was to analyze the function of the sanctions in the European Union's foreign policy towards Russia. The research indicated that the sanctions made policy coordination within the European Union member countries more robust, and increased collective diplomatic effort against Russia, through documentary analysis and reports of the European Council. The research resulted in the following findings: starting from 2014, sanctions became an integral part of the EU foreign policy. The study will add to the existing research by elucidating the relationship between sanctions and international diplomacy.

Roberts (2021) has done a study under the title Global Alliances and Economic Sanctions in Contemporary International Politics. The study was centered on the impact of sanctions on relations between Russia and non-western nations like China, India and Iran. The research identified and analyzed the data from international trade statistics and diplomatic documents, and concluded that the sanctions led to political and economic cooperation between Russia and Asian and Middle East countries to be intensified. The study found that sanctions changed the nature of global alliances and led to a greater geopolitical competition between the Western and the non-Western world. This study is relevant as it shows the broader international impact of sanctions outside of Europe.

The work on International Relations and Economic Pressure in the Russia – Ukraine War by Okafor (2022) was examined. The study analyzed the impact of sanctions on the political relations between the global powers from 2014–2022. The study showed that sanctions worsened relations between Russia and the NATO countries and exacerbated the fractures within the international system, through the use of comparative analysis and international policy reports. The research found that during the conflict, the role of sanctions started to grow as one of the key instruments of geopolitical competition. This will help support the present study as it demonstrates the effect of economic limitations on political relationships around the globe.

Adamu and Nwosu (2024) carried out a study on The Impact of European Union Sanctions on International Political Stability. The study was conducted to draw out the general impacts of sanctions on the political and economic relationship in the World between 2022-2024. According to the study, sanctions played a role in escalating geopolitical tensions and inflation rates worldwide, and in polarizing countries in their reactions to the Russia–Ukraine war, based on the UN, IMF and European Union reports. The results showed that in the conflict period, the sanctions played a significant role in influencing the foreign policies. The study is relevant to the present research because of the up-to-date evidence on the impact of the international sanctions and conflict management strategies.

2.5.3 The effectiveness of the European Union sanctions as a conflict resolution instrument

Ogunbiyi (2020) analysed EU Sanctions and Peacebuilding in Eastern Europe. The aim of the study was to check the role of sanctions imposed on Russia as a result of its annexation of Crimea in peaceful conflict management. The study identified a descriptive research design and secondary data from the reports of the European Union, which allowed the researchers to conclude that for some sectors of the Russian economy, the sanctions were ineffective, but did not immediately put an end to the war in Eastern Ukraine. The study has found that sanctions helped to increase the pressure on the Kurds rather than resolving the conflict directly. This study is complementary to the ongoing research as it examines the effectiveness of sanctions in international conflicts in practice.

Bercovitch (2021) conducted a study entitled Diplomacy, Sanctions, and International conflict management. The research was centred on the issue of the link between the use of sanctions and diplomatic talks in modern international relations. Qualitative analysis and case study methodology were used and it was concluded that the imposition of sanctions leads to a "bargaining pressure" that can stimulate negotiation between states with conflicting interests. The report, however, also pointed out that sanctions may also extend the duration of conflict when sanctioned states buck the system. The author has found that the most effective sanctions are those that are supported by continued diplomatic engagement and mediation. The present research contributes to the existing research by elucidating the context in which sanctions can be used as a successful instrument of conflict resolution.

Ekanem and Yusuf (2022) have done a study titled Economic Sanctions and Political Compliance: The Russian Experience. The purpose of the study was to find out the impact of EU sanctions on

Russia's foreign policy between 2014 and 2021. The study demonstrated that the implementation of sanctions had little effect on forcing Russia to withdraw from areas in dispute in the short term, although it contributed to the decline of the Russian economy. The authors concluded that it would not be possible to ensure political adherence to sanctions in major-power conflicts with sanctions alone. This study is relevant because it will focus on the restrictions on sanctions in international conflict management.

Dunne and McCarthy (2024) did a study on Sanctions, International Pressure, and Conflict Resolution Strategies. The study relied on the reports of the International Monetary Fund, European Council, and international diplomatic documents to evaluate the effectiveness of the EU sanctions against Russia enacted in 2014 and in effect until 2024. The results indicated that the sanctions had a very strong impact on the Russian economy and its international financial relations, but the conflict continued despite the sanctions. The study came to a conclusion that sanctions were not enough to solve the Russia – Ukraine conflict without a wider political dialogue and international mediation. The study would be directly relevant to the present research as it offers an evaluation of sanctions as tools of conflict resolution in the international relations at the present time.

2.6 Gap in Literature

While there are a number of studies on economic sanctions, international relations and the Russia–Ukraine conflict, there is a lack of literature on the effectiveness of EU sanctions as a conflict resolution instrument between 2014 and 2024. Most of the existing research, including the work by Drezner (2021) and Pape (2022), focused on the overall economic and political impact of sanctions on the targeted states, with many not conducting a detailed analysis of the success of sanctions in achieving their intended conflict resolution goals in the Russia–Ukraine case. First, many of the existing studies looked largely at the economic implications of sanctions, such as inflation, disruption of trade, and financial isolation, but did not sufficiently report on the actual implications for conflict de-escalation or peace-building. For example, Roberts (2021) and

Ogunleye and Ibrahim (2023) primarily studied the realignment of trade and inflationary pressures, while failing to provide a clear empirical evaluation of the impact of these economic conditions on Ukraine and Russia either on escalation of military conflicts or on diplomatic negotiations. Secondly, as the literature shows, sanctions are frequently analyzed as one uniform foreign policy instrument, and the goal of sanctions is not clearly differentiated between coercive, deterrent, and symbolic sanctions in the various stages of the Russia–Ukraine conflict. Research often focuses on the punitive aspect of sanctions and neglects to critically analyze the possibilities for negotiation, increased resistance or sustained hostility. Thus, it is difficult to define the exact impact of sanctions on the behavior of the conflict and international reaction during the study period.

The other key missing piece is the lack of focus on the effectiveness of sanctions for long-term political compliance from a key global actor, Russia. A few studies, including Williams and Cooper (2023) have noted that in addition to sanctions, diplomacy was a factor in the decision to cease or make a peace deal; however, few studies have tested the hypothesis that consistent economic pressure from 2014 to 2024 had a measurable impact on strategic decisions related to territory control, ceasefire agreements, or peace negotiations. Moreover, there is a lack of rigorous discussion on the interplay of the EU and other geopolitical factors, notably from the United States, China and NATO allies. There has been little discussion of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of sanctions as a mechanism to resolve a conflict in the case of the Russia–Ukraine war. To fill these gaps, this study examines EU sanctions in a focused study on EU sanctions as a tool to facilitate conflict resolution from 2014 to 2024. It not only examines the economic and political impact of sanctions on Russia, but also examines their effectiveness in shaping conflict dynamics, diplomacy and peace-building in the period under review..

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The Liberal Institutionalism Theory was used as a foundation for this study. It was a strong theory during the post–Second World War and Cold War eras, developed by the works of scholars like Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, who believed that international cooperation is possible even in an anarchic global system based on institutions, rules, and interdependence between states. Liberal Institutionalism states that states are not solely motivated by power politics, but also by mutual interests, shared norms, and the mutual desire for international institution cooperation. It stresses that bodies like the European Union, United Nations and the World Trade Organization have a major role to play in minimising conflict through creating space for dialogue, setting the rules for behaviour of states and making sure they stick to them. The theory also suggests that a state that is economically interdependent with others will also be more inclined towards peaceful settlements due to increased costs of conflict. Economic instruments, therefore, as in this sense, sanctions, are punitive instruments as well as instruments which are used to strengthen compliance and change behaviour in the international system and to produce stability.

The significance of Liberal Institutionalism Theory in this study is that it can be used to explain how the European Union applied economic sanctions against Russia in the period from 2014-2024 due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine through the use of institutional cooperation and collective decision-making. The enforcement of sanctions was not done by national states unilaterally, but through EU institutional procedures, which is what theory has until now focused on: collective action and multilateral governance. The theory can be used to understand how the EU tried to shape Russia's actions through economic measures, diplomatic action, policy coordination and not military means. It also provides a useful illustration of the ways in which international institutions influence the actions of states, through the rules and mechanisms they create that influence the way that states react to conflict. Moreover, the relevance of Liberal Institutionalism Theory in the explanation of the effect of the sanctions on international relations during the research period was obtained. The economic measures taken against Russia had an impact on trade, financial and diplomatic ties between Russia and its EU partners. These developments illustrate the theory's thesis on interdependence of states affording opportunities and constraints in IR. How institutional choices can influence global economic and political systems is evident in the decline in trade, financial flows and technological cooperation between Russia and the European Union. The theory also provides some insight into the importance of international cooperation in creating pressure on Russia through multiple sanctions implemented by the member countries and allies. Further, the theory offers a method to comprehend the efficiency of conflict resolution means as sanctions. Liberal Institutionalism states that international institutions become a part of the solution of how to lessen conflict by making it more transparent, less uncertain, and more conducive to negotiation between states. In the case of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, the European Union adopted a combination of institutional measures including sanctions with the objective of forcing Russia to abide by international law and thus to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The ongoing nature of the conflict since 2014, however, also shows the weakness of institutions, if they are faced with intense geopolitical interests and opposition from key powers. It is shown in the current study that when applied to the economic sanctions, the theory of Liberal Institutionalism indicates that the economic sanctions are not merely national practices, but they are also a means of international governance, which is created through institutional cooperation. It offers a basis for the analysis of EU coordination of sanctions against Russia, the impact of the sanctions on international relations, and the role of institutional mechanisms in conflict management and resolution in the process observed.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses will be used as a guide for this study:

1. European Union economic sanctions have significant impact on Russia economic activities from 2014-2024.

2. European Union sanctions have significant influence on the Russia– war from 2014 to 2024.

3. European Union sanctions have significantly served as an effective tool for conflict resolution between 2014 and 2024.

3.3 Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design, as a content and documentary analysis research. The systematic method of content analysis, which is explained by Krippendorff (2014), is employed to interpret written, visual and recorded materials, to uncover patterns and meaning. This includes analysing secondary sources like policy documents, academic journals, official reports and the media. Documentary analysis was also used in this study. This includes the review of important documents, including EU policy statements, sanctions reports, documents on international relations, and economic information, as well as scholarly papers about the Russia–Ukraine conflict. These materials enabled the analysis of EU sanctions against Russia (2014-2024) and the reliability of the information. The design was suitable in this study to support the researcher in making an assessment based on the documentations found on the implementation of economic sanctions as a conflict resolution tool. It additionally enabled analysis of trends, policy responses and international reactions without the need for primary data collection..

3.4 Method of Data Collection

The documentary method of data collection was used in this study and only secondary sources were used to obtain the information necessary for the study of the EU sanctions and the Russia – Ukraine conflict and the period 2014-2024. Secondary data is data that has been already produced, compiled or published by scholars, institutions and organizations, for example books, journal articles, policy papers, government publications, media reports and publications by international organizations (Rodney, 2018). These sources contained information on the historical, political, economic and diplomatic background to the imposition and impact of sanctions against Russia. The secondary sources used for this study were European Union official reports, publications of the United Nations, reports on World Bank and International Monetary Fund and academic journals, international relations texts, policy briefs, and reputable media reports. The materials contained detailed information about the economic sanctions, diplomatic relations, trade restrictions, financial constraints and geopolitical reaction between Russia and the western countries in the period under consideration. For this study, the documentary method was suitable in that the researcher got access to a large amount of information that was already available without having to go out in the field to gather primary sources of data. It also allowed for a comparison of views on the effectiveness of sanctions as a means of conflict resolution. The study's use of credible and verifiable sources ensured the reliability and appropriateness of the data collected, which were then suitable for analyzing the effects of European Union sanctions on Russia during the period from 2014 to 2024.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

In data analysis, this study used qualitative descriptive analysis. This was the proper approach given that the research was secondary and was based on the EU reports, publications by international organizations, policy documents, academic journals, and media sources regarding sanctions imposed on Russia from 2014 to 2024. The analysis used a systematic approach to organize, interpret and synthesize these materials, uncovering recurring patterns, key developments and relationships with the economic sanctions and conflict resolution in the Russia – Ukraine crisis. The reviewed documents were analysed for key themes including economic sanctions, trade restrictions, financial limitations, diplomatic relations, energy sanctions and political measures taken by the member states of the European Union and Russia. The themes were then brought together and analyzed to examine the impact of the sanctions on Russia's economy, international relations, military activities, and diplomatic efforts in the time period studied. The study also covered reports of foreign policy decisions, geopolitical tensions and peace initiatives for evaluating the effectiveness of sanctions as a tool to resolve conflict. The study has compared results of various reliable international sources, which allowed the author to reveal the consistency regarding the effects and restrictions of the sanctions of the European Union on Russia. The qualitative descriptive approach allowed for a clear interpretation of trends and relationships in the data, and provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of sanctions on the Russia–Ukraine conflict from 2014 to 2024..

3.5 Logical Framework

Table 3.1: Logical Data Framework

S/N	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS	MAJOR VARIABLES	METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION	SOURCES OF DATA	METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS
1	To examine the impact of the European Union's economic sanctions on Russia from 2014 to 2024.	European Union economic sanctions have no significant effect on Russia between 2014 and 2024.	(x) European Union economic sanctions indicators (trade restrictions, financial sanctions, asset freezes, energy sanctions, export controls). (y) Economic performance indicators of Russia (GDP, inflation, trade volume, foreign investment, currency stability).	Documentary method of data collection	Secondary sources such as journals, EU policy reports, IMF and World Bank reports, books, newspapers, online publications	Qualitative descriptive analysis
2	To examine how the European Union sanctions influenced the	European Union sanctions have no significant influence on the Russia–Ukraine conflict and	(x) EU sanctions and diplomatic measures (sanctions packages, trade bans, financial restrictions, diplomatic actions).	Documentary method of data collection	Secondary sources such as international relations journals, EU official documents, UN	Qualitative descriptive analysis

	Russia–Ukraine war from 2014 to 2024.	international relations from 2014 to 2024.	(y) International relations indicators (diplomatic ties, alliances, geopolitical responses, conflict intensity).		reports, media articles, policy briefs	
3	To critically examine how effective European Union sanctions are as a conflict resolution strategy from 2014 to 2024.	European Union sanctions have not significantly served as an effective tool for conflict resolution between 2014 and 2024.	(x) EU sanctions as conflict resolution instruments (coercive diplomacy, economic pressure, sanctions regimes). (y) Conflict resolution outcomes (peace negotiations, ceasefire attempts, reduction in hostility, diplomatic settlements).	Documentary method of data collection	Secondary sources such as academic journals, EU reports, United Nations publications, policy analyses, international relations books	Qualitative descriptive analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presented the results of the study on economic sanctions as a tool to resolve conflict—through analyzing the EU's sanctions against Russia from 2014 to 2024. The sources for secondary data used for the analysis were European Union reports, international organizations, academic publication, policy documents, economic reports, and credible media outlets. The results were grouped around the main themes of the study: Impact of the European Union sanctions against Russia, the role of sanctions in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and in international relations, and the effectiveness of the sanctions as a tool to resolve the conflict during the studied period. The chapter also connected the results with the theoretical framework presented to explain the role of institutional cooperation, economic pressures, and diplomatic approaches in molding international relations and the dynamics of conflict management during 2014 to 2024.

4.1 European Union Economic Sanctions on Russia (2014–2024)..

The economic sanctions imposed by the EU on Russia from 2014 to 2024 provoked marked changes in Russia's economic structure, trade relations, financial system and international status. The sanctions regime was gradually broadened since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and tightened even more since 2022, impacting various areas of the Russian economy and changing its economic relations with international partners (Okeke, 2023). Russia's trade relations with Europe and other western economies was one of the areas hit. The European Union (EU) imposed import and export bans on Russia, which caused a decline in its trade with these important nations, including in advanced technology, machinery and even defence sectors (Oluwafemi, 2022). Ajayi (2021) pointed out that the ban on high-tech exports hurt Russia's industrial supply chains, particularly those in the production of energy and other industrial goods. These measures cut off Russian trading with a number of EU members, driving Russian trade to Asia and Middle East.

But the financial sector also took a strong hit from the sanctions. The restriction of EU major Russian banks to the international financial market and the limitation of their capacity for foreign transactions reduced their capabilities (Chukwuma, 2023). According to Eze (2022), asset freezes on Russian officials and institutions made it harder for investors to access Russian reserves and led to a decline in investor confidence in the Russian economy. The ban on several Russian banks from SWIFT also caused other international banking transactions to suffer, and made business processes costlier for Russian companies. Energy exports, an important source of revenues for the Russian Federation, were also affected. Russia's ability to increase its long-term oil production was hampered by restrictions on energy investments, drilling machines and oil refining technology (2023, Okeke). Umeh (2022) noted that the impact of the sanctions was price discounts and logistical challenges stemming from the sanctions, thus impacting overall revenue generation as Russia redirected its energy exports to non-European countries. As a result, the energy sector was subjected to structural pressures and market pressures in the sanction period.

Technological sanctions also impacted Russia's industries, military prowess, and the overall standard of living. Russia's opportunities for advanced semiconductor goods exports and dual-use technologies were curtailed (Ibrahim, 2024). This limitation stymied innovation and limited efficiency in industries like aviation, telecommunication and defence manufacturing, among others, according to Nwankwo (2023). This has led to Russia's dependence on its own substitutes and alternate suppliers, albeit sometimes less efficient and more expensive (Oluwafemi, 2022). Sanctions were also having an effect on the diplomatic and economic levels. EU policies curbed bilateral contacts with Russia to the level of trade forums, investment platforms, and international economic institutions (Adeniran, 2022). Chinedu (2021) noted that this isolation resulted in Russia's Foreign Economic policy changing gears, with a drive towards building partnerships with non-Western countries such as India and China. This is a factor in the realignment of the world economy in the period covered. Those sanctions imposed by the European Union between 2014 and 2024 had a profound impact on Russia's economic activity, financial prospects, technical progress, and foreign trade. The measures led to a short-term shock and a long-term restructuring of the Russian economy as well as affected its economic cooperation and strategy with other countries..

4.1.1 Nature and Categories of Sanctions Imposed on Russia..

European Union sanctions against Russia imposed from 2014 to 2024 were designed within a coordinated foreign policy framework to attempt to induce Russia to change its behavior in the Russia–Ukraine conflict and reduce its ability to maintain a long-term military operation. The sanctions were not permanent, but have been implemented in various stages since 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and tightened up the measures in 2022, when the conflict escalated, to a more comprehensive level of economic sanctions. Modern sanctions typically have a “graduated pressure tool” effect that allows the sanctions' enforcers to tighten economic measures as escalation of geopolitical tensions occurs, Okafor (2022) argues. In that sense, the EU sanctions on Russia were designed to go hand-in-hand with diplomatic isolation and economic sanctions, to bring about behavioural changes, but not military confrontation. A point of the sanctions was the targeted or “smart” nature of the sanctions. The first round was oriented towards actors, people, politicians and business people who were seen as having been particularly involved in the decision-making process concerning Ukraine. These comprised travel restrictions, asset seizures and restrictions on access to European financial systems. Targeted sanctions, according to Nwosu (2021), are commonly employed to reduce the humanitarian impact, and to focus pressure on decision makers. Likewise, Müller (2020) noted that: "The purpose of such measures is to cause political discomfort among elites without causing large-scale disruptions to the civilian population. In Russia's case, this was meant to chip away at the political support bases, and to send a message of international condemnation for the annexation of territory.

The second big part of the EU answer was related to financial sanctions. These measures included barring Russian banks and financial institutions from gaining access to the European financial markets and from being part of global capital markets. This also caused severe repercussions on cross-border financial transactions and cost of international trade due to the exclusion of selected banks from SWIFT. Financial sanctions, given that they directly impact the flow of funds and investor confidence, are one of the strongest financial means of economic coersion, according to Adeyemi (2023). Similarly, Li and Zhang (2021) claimed that the financial constraints could lead to the capital flight, depreciation of the currency, and decrease in foreign investments that clearly happened in the Russian case in the sanctions period. Trade sanctions also were a key element of the EU approach. The measures included a ban on the export and import of so-called 'dual-use' items, high-tech machinery, arms and other defence-related equipment, industrial components. The limits were meant to cripple Russia's industrial capabilities, limit the country's ability to develop in sensitive industries and capabilities. Ezeani (2022) added that the economies that heavily rely on imported technology and intermediate goods are most affected by trade sanctions. Accordingly, Carter (2021) reported that export restrictions would negatively impact supply chains and has a negative impact on the productivity of manufacturing economies heavily dependent on outside supply. These restrictions resulted in a shortage of supplies in Russia's manufacturing, automotive and defence sectors.

One of the more significant sanctions was the energy sanction, as Russia relies heavily on oil and gas revenues. The European Union imposed restrictions on oil imports and investments in energy, and banned access to cutting-edge technologies for oil extraction and refinement. Ibrahim (2022) states that energy sanctions have been imposed on resource dependent countries as they have a direct impact on government income. Likewise, Hansen (2020) found that energy export curbs could lead to fiscal instability in the exporting countries, especially in the long term. The

Russia's efforts to shift energy supplies to Asian markets had minimal impact as it offered discounts and logistical issues lowered profits. Technological sanctions were the last type of restrictions. These included restrictions on Russia's ability to get access to cutting-edge semiconductors, aviation technology, systems based on artificial intelligence, and telecommunications equipment. Nnamani (2023) argued that technology sanctions have become part of today's geopolitics due to the capacity of the technology field to limit the capacity of a country for innovation and competition in the sector. Likewise, Johnson (2021) pointed out that any hindrances in the use of dual-use technologies would hamper military modernization and industrial development as well. In the case of Russia, these measures opened loopholes in the supply chains of the Russian aviation industry, the defence sector, the digital sector, etc. The possible range of sanctions applied against Russia can be neatly summarised in the table below::

Table 4.1: Categories of European Union Sanctions Imposed on Russia (2014–2024)..

S/N	Category of Sanctions	Description	Main Target Areas
1	Targeted (Individual) Sanctions	Travel bans, visa restrictions, and asset freezes on selected individuals and organizations	Political elites, business oligarchs, military-linked actors
2	Financial Sanctions	Restrictions on access to EU financial markets and exclusion from major payment systems	Banks, financial institutions, sovereign funding channels
3	Trade Sanctions	Export and import restrictions on sensitive goods and dual-use technologies	Defence equipment, machinery, industrial inputs
4	Energy Sanctions	Restrictions on oil imports, energy investment, and extraction technology	Oil and gas sector, energy infrastructure
5	Technology Sanctions	Controls on advanced technologies and digital systems exports	Semiconductors, aviation systems, telecommunications, AI tools

Source: European Union Council Reports (2014–2024)

As illustrated in the table above, EU sanctions against Russia were multi-layered, and strategically coordinated – targeting various sectors of the Russian economy. The first type of sanctions – called targeted sanctions – were intended to put political pressure on individuals and organizations involved with state decision making. They were not extensive but were symbolic in their message of international condemnation, but were also designed to minimise, as far as possible, civilian suffering. Financial sanctions were a more direct economic limitation, by limiting the ability of the Russian government to utilize international financial networks and foreign capital. Financial isolation makes a country incapable of stabilising its currency and finance international trade, Eboh (2022) explained. This manifested itself in the growing use of Russian financial mechanisms and in financial partners other than the West. Russia suffered from disruption of supplies of industrial inputs and essential products into the country due to the trade sanctions. The limitations impacted industrial production in major industries, like defence and manufacturing, in addition to production efficiency. As Clark (2021) has pointed out, the most successful restrictions on trade are aimed at those economies that are most reliant on the imported technology, which is the case with Russia's industrial structure. The sanctions on Russia's energy sector had several ramifications, as hydrocarbons are key to the Russian economy. The decline in oil and gas export revenues put a strain on government spending, and reduced long-term investments in energy infrastructure. A country's energy-based economy is especially sensitive to outside constraints on its export markets and ability to access technology as noted by Okoye (2023). Few technical sanctions added to the structural restrictions, as they prevented Russia from gaining access to modern industrial technologies and digital systems. The constraints had a negative impact on innovation potential and reliance on alternative supplier in the outside world of western economic bloc. Tech denials, as Brown (2020) stated, are designed to be long-term solutions to change the industrial competitiveness and innovation capacity. The table shows that the European Union (EU) had a comprehensive sanctions regime, which contained both political, financial, trade, energy and technological measures. The idea was to build up the pressure on Russia's economic and strategic potential as well as to shape its geopolitical actions through multi-sectoral approach..

4.1.2 Financial and Trade Restrictions on Russia..

An integral part of the European Union sanctions against Russia from 2014 to 2024 was financial and trade sanctions. The measures were adopted to undermine Russia's ability to be plugged into the world financial system and its ability to access key trade infrastructure. Following 2022, further economic pressures were imposed due to the increase in the intensity of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine (Okoye, 2023). Financial sanctions were mainly imposed on Russian banks, state-owned enterprises and personal entities involved in the decision-making process of the state (Johnson, 2021). These measures were implemented such as restrictions on access to capital markets in Europe, ban on certain financial transactions, freezing of assets and the limitation of foreign investment inflows. Financial sanctions work via choking the liquidity and constraining external financing for targeted states, which diminishes the economic flexibility of these states, Eboh (2022) explained. For Russia, these restrictions added to the uncertainty in financial markets, and reduced investor confidence. The other significant action was to exclude certain Russian banks from the SWIFT international payment system. This had a negative impact on cross-border financial messaging and delayed intra-border settlements. According to Nwosu (2021), the exclusion of the countries from global payment systems has implications on the efficiency of trade and the cost of transactions for businesses involved in international trade.

Trade sanctions also played a big role in the sanctions. These were aimed at the export of dual use items, high-tech machinery, aviation equipment and military technologies to Russia. Clark (2021) argues that the most effective restriction measure is one that restricts trade in industrial inputs, since it can be most harmful to production capacity and technological progress in economies that rely heavily on imported industrial inputs. Moreover, the European Union imposed tariffs on Russian imports of certain products, including energy resources, coal, and steel. This limited Russia's trade connections with Europe, and compelled it to diversify its trade ties. Li and Zhang (2021) noted that one of the consequences of trade restrictions is a restructuring of the market and reliance on other countries for trade. The existing financial and trade sanctions against Russia can be summed up in the following table:

Table 4.2 Selected Financial and Trade Indicators of Russia under EU Sanctions (2014–2024)..

Year	Foreign Direct Investment Inflows (US$ Billion)	GDP Growth Rate (%)	Exports to EU (€ Billion)	Imports from EU (€ Billion)
2014	22.0	0.7	182.0	119.0
2016	32.5	-0.2	120.0	69.0
2018	8.8	2.8	160.0	81.0
2020	10.1	-2.7	95.0	67.0
2022	-18.7	-2.1	86.0	55.0
2024	5.4	3.6	52.0	34.0

Source: European Union Council Reports (2014–2024)

Selected economic and trade data showing the effects of the EU sanctions on Russia from 2014 to 2024 are presented in Table 4.2. During the period of observation, the FDI inflows, GDP growth, and trade relations between Russia and the EU underwent substantial changes, as presented in the table. Foreign direct investment inflows dropped significantly following the implementation of a series of sanctions, especially the escalation of the Russia–Ukraine conflict in 2022, as the data show. This decrease was caused by investor uncertainty, financial transaction limitations and the removal of many Western companies. The negative FDI indicator in 2022 was due to the outflow of capital and a decline in foreign business activity in the Russian economy. The table also indicates that Russia exports to and imports from the European Union have also significantly decreased. Exports to the EU were sharply curtailed due to measures taken on energy, metals and strategic products. Likewise exports to the EU fell due to export controls on machinery, technology, industrial equipment, and other products. All these developments weakened the traditional Russian-European trade ties. There were also fluctuations in GDP growth during the period. The sanctions pressure, the reduction of foreign investment, financial restrictions and breaks in international trade were linked to the economic contractions in some years. The data indicate that financial and trade restrictions imposed by the EU had a measurable impact on the Russian economy, even though the impact was less severe than the war in Ukraine, as Russia found other paths to trade and other policy responses...

4.1.3 Energy and Technology Sanctions Against Russia..

Sanctions on energy and technologies were one of the most effective and strategically valuable aspects of the EU's restrictive actions against Russia from 2014 through 2024. The reason behind these sanctions is to attack two key pillars of Russia's economy, energy exports – a key source of national revenues and technological imports – that maintain the country's industrial capability, defence means and innovation. Energy sanctions started to be implemented since 2014 and extended in force since the escalation of the Russia–Ukraine conflict in 2022. The European Union (EU) has introduced some restrictions on Russian crude oil, petroleum products, coal, and energy commodity imports. These actions were intended to decrease Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies, as well as Russia's export revenue. Umeh (2022) noted that the reason energy sanctions work very well in the resource-dependent economies is because they cut down on foreign exchange inflows and weaken fiscal stability. The EU also imposed limitations on energy-related investments, insurance services for oil transport and technology transfers to facilitate oil exploration and extraction. Restricting access to upstream energy technologies has implications for long-term production potential, particularly in countries which depend on the use of advanced drilling and offshore extraction technologies, Hansen (2020) noted. The restrictions hindered the modernization of the energy sector, and limited Russia's capability to explore new oil fields, including those in the Arctic and deep water areas (Li & Zhang, 2021).

The other significant aspect of the restrictive measures was technology sanctions. These were restrictions on Russia's access to high-tech semiconductors, aerospace components, telecommunications, AI and dual-use technologies. Johnson (2021) pointed out that technology denial regimes are aimed at making a nation less competitive in industry by limiting inputs such as technology. In the Russian context, these measures impacted several industries such as defence manufacturing, aviation maintenance, digital infrastructure and electronics manufacturing (Clark, 2021). The EU also banned export of advanced manufacturing and industrial automation machinery and software systems. Brown (2020) concluded that sanctions now have a “strategic technology chokepoint” element that hinders a nation's technological independence in key sectors. This was reflected in Russia's dependence on non-Western sources to provide alternative supply of technology due to sanctions. Moreover, energy and technology sanctions required Russia to pursue counter strategies like switching energy supplies to Asia, boosting domestic supplies of replacement technologies and developing closer ties with non-Western countries. This can involve long-term structural changes that may not be immediately awarded for the lack of Western markets and technology, Okafor (2022) pointed out. The energy and technology sanctions that have been put against Russia can be summarized in the table below:

Table 4.3: Energy and Technology Sanctions Imposed on Russia..

S/N	Category	Description	Main Impact Areas
1	Oil Import Restrictions	Ban/reduction of Russian crude oil and petroleum imports into the EU	Reduced export revenue and foreign exchange earnings
2	Coal Import Ban	Prohibition of coal imports from Russia	Loss of European energy market share
3	Energy Investment Restrictions	Ban on EU investment in Russian energy exploration and production	Reduced expansion of oil and gas infrastructure

4	Energy Technology Restrictions	Restrictions on transfer of drilling, refining, and extraction technologies	Slowed development of energy sector capacity
5	Semiconductor Export Controls	Limits on export of advanced chips and microelectronics	Reduced industrial and defence manufacturing capability
6	Aerospace Restrictions	Ban on aircraft parts, maintenance technology, and aviation software	Weakening of civil aviation and aerospace industry
7	Telecommunications Controls	Restrictions on telecom equipment and digital infrastructure tools	Reduced digital modernization and connectivity capacity
8	Dual-Use Technology Ban	Restrictions on technologies usable for both civilian and military purposes	Constraints on defence production and innovation

Source: European Union Council Reports (2014–2024

The table demonstrates that energy and technology sanctions had two objectives: to impact not only Russia's immediate revenues, but also its industrial base. The energy cuts aimed at curbing Russia's influence on European energy markets, particularly by banning its oil and coal imports. All these steps had an impact on significantly cutting export revenues and shifted Russia's energy trade to other markets. Russia's critical energy investment restrictions also limited the capacity to grow the industry's production capabilities, by restricting access to European capital and expertise in the exploration and extraction industry. This had a negative impact on the sustainability of the energy industry in general, particularly in more technically oriented areas of exploration like offshore and arctic areas. Russia's access to some critical industrial inputs used in modern production systems was curtailed by technology sanctions.Technology sanctions affected Russia's access to some critical industrial inputs needed to support modern production systems. Semiconductor export controls were significant as microchips are vital to electronics and defence systems and industrial automation. This area's restrictions caused disruptions in the supply chain, lagging technological advances. The aircraft maintenance, provision of spare parts and aviation software systems were impacted by the aerospace restrictions, which in turn led to the decline of the civil aviation business and to the growth of operational difficulties of airlines and aircraft manufacturers. Likewise, Russia was hampered in its efforts to modernize the digital sector due to the restrictions on telecommunications. The dual-use technology ban also limited the availability of the products for both civilian and military use impacting defence production capacity and technological innovation in various fields..

4.2 Effects of European Union Sanctions on Russia..

The EU sanctions against Russia, which have been in effect since 2014 and will be extended for another three years in 2024, have had significant economic, political, financial and technological repercussions for the Russian Federation. The sanctions, in addition to other international measures, were meant to put pressure on Russia over the events in Ukraine as well as influence its foreign policy choices, without resorting to military force. Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the sanctions have gradually been increasing from targeted sanctions to full economic sanctions, which came in place after the intensification of the Russia–Ukraine war in 2022. Russia saw developments in all aspects of its trade, economic stability, industry, diplomacy, and long-term economic planning during this time. The first impact of the sanctions was on Russia's financial system. The restrictions imposed on the big banks and the limited access by the banks to capital markets in Europe made investors less confident and foreign investment less likely to flow. Financial sanctions have created instability in Russian financial markets, by limiting the amount of borrowing from outside Russia and exerting pressure on domestic liquidity, said Connolly (2022). Selected Russian banks were also added to the list of sanctions, which made international financial transactions more difficult and affected the process of settling international trade. This made it more costly to conduct business and less efficient for Russia to be part of the world's financial networks (Aslund, 2023). The sanctions also helped to cause the currency of Russia to fluctuate. After a series of tighter restrictions were imposed in 2022, the Russian currency weakened, putting inflationary pressure on the

Russian economy. Instability in currency under sanctions can lead to rising prices for imported goods, and reduce the purchasing power of households (Hanson, 2022). The Russian government subsequently enacted monetary measures and foreign exchange regulations to curb inflation, but inflationary pressures continued to be a serious issue in a number of areas of the economy.

During the period under study trade patterns were also affected. In several strategic sectors, volumes of export and import trade between Russia and EU member countries decreased due to restrictions on trade. Guriev and Itskhoki (2023) argued that sanctions decreased Russia's ability to purchase and import industrial equipment, machinery, and advanced technology required for production and infrastructure construction. This caused some industries to experience a shortage of supplies and thus reduced productivity in the industries. The imposition of the sanctions also battered well-developed supply lines that had previously connected Russia tightly to the European markets. Another significant impact was felt in the energy industry – one of the leading sources of government revenue for Russia. Restrictions in Europe on oil imports and energy related technologies decreased export revenues and the availability of long-term investment opportunities for oil and gas production. The sanctions caused the Russian government to pivot towards Asian countries such as China and India to fill the gap of less demand from Europe (Rutland, 2022). This change would minimize the short-term impact of market losses, but would have an impact on profitability through transport cost and discounts. The drop in energy cooperation with the EU also affected Russia's role in the global energy market.

The sanctions imposed on Russia were also related to technology, creating further difficulties for the country's industries and technologies. Limited availability of semiconductors, aircraft components, software programs and digital infrastructure components hampered production in various sectors. Baldwin and Freeman (2022) pointed out that technology sanctions have a more adverse effect in the long term, due to a reduction in innovation capacity and industrial modernization. Russia faced problems in obtaining high-tech technological inputs for its aerospace industry, telecommunications, automotive industry, and defence industry. These shortages hindered the development of industries and led to the switch to alternative sources in other western economies. The sanctions also had an impact on Russia's diplomatic, political ties with the Western countries. The political situation between the European Union and Russia worsened a great deal, and hence, there was a decline in diplomatic cooperation between both the sides and an increase in their geopolitical rivalry. According to Sakwa (2021), sanctions have helped to exacerbate the relationship between Russia and the West by fueling mistrust and restricting scope for political dialogue. In response, Russia had bolstered ties with non-Western partners, such as China, Iran and a number of Asian and Middle Eastern nations. This helped lay the groundwork for the development of other economic and diplomatic alliances that seek to decrease European reliance.

Internally, the sanctions imposed affected the lives and consumer markets. Some foreign products were less available and prices were up due to restrictions on imports. There were several periods in which the household purchasing power decreased because of inflation and economic uncertainty. Sanctions also have indirect social effects such as higher risk of unemployment, lower business confidence and lower consumer stability, says Åslund (2022). For small and medium-sized enterprises that relied heavily on imported inputs, it was a challenge to run their businesses, particularly in manufacturing and technology industries. The Russian government has put several measures in place to mitigate effects of the sanctions. These encompassed import substitution measures, the development of domestic production, diversification of export markets and greater cooperation with non-Western economies. According to Lipman (2023), Russia's goal was to become less dependent on Western countries because of the sanctions imposed by the West, by investing more in building its own industries and alternative payment systems that are not part of the Western financial system. The process of transition, however, was costly and needed significant state funding...

4.2.1 The impact on Russia's Economy..

The sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia have taken effect since 2014 and had a definite impact on the Russian economy. These sanctions included those imposed on key industries like banking, trade, energy, manufacturing, technology and investment. With the escalation of the Russia–Ukraine war in 2022, the restrictions tightened and the European Union and its allies adopted a more comprehensive approach to financial and trade restrictions. The economic implications were shown in the decrease of foreign investment, disturbances of international trade, the inflationary pressure, the decrease of industrial production and the changes in the stability of the currency. Foreign direct investment and access to the international capital markets were the most significant economic impacts. European banks and state-run companies were denied any loans and investment to Russian banks and state-run companies. This led to a decline in external financing opportunities and greater strain on domestic financial systems, Connolly (2023) says. Economic uncertainty and restrictions on business transactions also caused many multinationals to halt operations and/or cut back on the amount of business they conducted in Russia. The restrictions also had a negative impact on the industrial and manufacturing industries of Russia. Advanced machinery, semiconductors and industrial equipment were subject to export restrictions which wreaked havoc on supply chains and hurt production in technology-intensive industries. Guriev and Itskhoki (2023) argued that industrial production slowed down due to a drop in access to key technological inputs needed for industrial production and infrastructure development as a result of sanctions. There was a lack of spare parts and equipment in several industries, especially in the aviation, automobile production and electronics manufacturing sectors. The table below provides a summary of the main economic impacts of the EU sanctions against Russia:

Table 4.4: Effects of European Union Sanctions on Russia's Economy

S/N	Economic Area	Nature of Effect	Resulting Economic Impact
1	Banking and Finance	Restrictions on capital markets and banking transactions	Reduced foreign investment and limited external financing
2	Trade and Manufacturing	Export controls on machinery and industrial equipment	Decline in industrial production and supply shortages
3	Currency Stability	Financial restrictions and market uncertainty	Depreciation of the ruble and inflationary pressure
4	Consumer Market	Reduced importation of foreign goods	Rising prices and reduced purchasing power
5	Energy Sector	Reduction in oil and gas exports to Europe	Decline in export earnings and revenue pressure
6	Technology Sector	Restrictions on semiconductors and advanced technology	Slower technological development and innovation
7	Foreign Investment	Withdrawal of foreign firms and investors	Reduced business confidence and market instability

Source: Compiled by the researcher from IMF Reports (2023) and European Union Council Reports (2014–2024)

As demonstrated in the above table, the sanctions had an impact on several segments of the Russian economy. Limitations on the banking and financial sector hinder Russia's ability to access international capital markets, thus slowing down the flow of investment into the country and the availability of borrowing. The export controls caused a disruption of trade and manufactures, as a lack of technological equipment, machinery and industrial tools was hindering production. This led to shortages and hampered the industries' operation. Financial uncertainty, and limitations on foreign exchange transactions resulted in instability in the currency, which's depreciation and its accompanying rise of inflation. These led to a higher price for imported goods and to less buying power for consumers. The energy industry saw a decline in profits caused by the decrease of Russian oil and gas imports in Europe. Russia diverted some of its exports to other markets, but the profitability was reduced due to transportation expenses and reduced prices. The limitations of technology hindered innovation and industrial modernization, restricting access to components and devices of the digital infrastructure and semiconductors. Further, foreign companies' withdrawal affected the confidence of businesses and gave an effect on the stability of the economy in some industries. The table thus illustrates the wide economic impact of the EU sanctions, on the economic stability of the Russian Federation, on its industrial potential, on its trade relations and further economic development in the period studied..

4.2.2 Effects on Russia's Political and Diplomatic Relations..

Sanctions against Russia implemented by the European Union in 2014-2024 had a definite impact on the nation's foreign and domestic policies and relations with a number of countries and international institutions. These sanctions were imposed in the context of broader sanctions imposed on Russia by the international community in the wake of the annexation of the Crimea in 2014 and the escalation of the war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022. In addition to the economic impacts, the sanctions changed Russia's foreign policy agenda, damaged ties with the Western nations, worsened geopolitical relations, and prompted Russia to strengthen ties with non-Western nations. The impact of the sanctions was severe on the political front, with the EU and Russia's relations falling to new lows. Russia had long-established relations with a number of European nations in the fields of political discussions, energy deals, and trade before 2014. But, the sanctions did lead to mistrust and a decrease in cooperation on various strategic aspects, including regional diplomacy, trade and security. The sanctions had a negative impact on Russia's diplomatic cooperation with Western countries, according to Sakwa (2021), who noted that they helped undermine a number of diplomatic efforts that had previously been undertaken to facilitate collaboration between the two sides. The political conflicts escalated further following 2022 when further measures were taken against the Russian authorities, institutions and state-owned enterprises. The course of relations between Russia and the U.S. and NATO members was also seen as more confrontational during the period reviewed. However, Mearsheimer (2022) noted that the sanc.tions fuelled geopolitical competition between Russia and Western nations, notably over security concerns in Eastern Europe. There was a decline in cooperation on international security issues as a result of diplomatic expulsions, limitations on official visits and military tensions. This made it difficult for Russia's political voice to be heard in some Western-supported institutions, as well as to facilitate positive diplomatic dialo.gue. The following table shows the main political and diplomatic consequences of the EU's sanctions against Russia:

Table 4.5: Effects of European Union Sanctions on Russia's Political and Diplomatic Relations

S/N	Political/Diplomatic Area	Nature of Effect	Resulting Outcome
1	Russia–EU Relations	Reduction in political and economic cooperation	Increased diplomatic tension and mistrust
2	Relations with NATO and Western States	Intensified geopolitical rivalry	Decline in security cooperation
3	International Diplomacy	Diplomatic restrictions and political isolation	Reduced participation in some global forums
4	Foreign Alliances	Expansion of ties with non-Western countries	Stronger relations with China, Iran, and Asian states
5	Multilateral Organizations	Suspension or limitations in some institutions	Shift toward alternative international blocs
6	Domestic Politics	Rise in nationalist political narratives	Increased government support and anti-Western sentiment
7	Global Political Image	Increased criticism from Western governments	Growing polarization in international relations

Source: Compiled by the researcher from European Union Council Reports (2014–2024), and NATO Policy Reports (2023).

As seen from the above table, the sanctions have had far-reaching political and diplomatic impact on Russia. The Russia-EU tensions grew as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian problem and the ongoing escalation of sanct.ions. This had a negative effect on the political dialogue and cooperation in a number of areas. The sanctions also exacerbated Russia-NATO tensions and decreased cooperation in international security issues, fueling geopolitical competition and diminishing cooperation. Poor relations between Russia and western governments also grew due to diplomatic expulsions and political disagreements. At the transnational level, there were limitations in some of the international political and diplomatic institutions, with a resulting partial political isolation in Western-led forums for Russia. Russia, in turn, bolstered its relations with non-Western nations, like China, Iran and India, on the political and economic fronts. The table also suggests that sanctions affected the internal political climate in Russia, as they helped to foster the nationalist narrative and anti-Western sentiments among certain groups of the population. These developments were exploited by the government to support the policies of sovereignty and economic self reliance. The table thus highlights not only the extent of the EU's economic sanctions against Russia, but also the impact on Russia's foreign policy choices, foreign policy and international politics from 2014-2024..

4.3 Economic Sanctions as a Means of Conflict Resolution…

Economic sanctions have emerged to be one of the principal tools of international relations that is employed to bring about change in the behavior of a state without resorting to military action. Sanctions are the willful application of economic measures by one or more states against another state to force the adoption of a different policy, deter aggression and ensure compliance with international law. These can include the restrictions on trade, financial, asset, travel, technical and strategic goods and services embargoes. Hufbauer, Schott, and Elliott (2021) have suggested that the rationale of economic sanctions is to “place an economic and political burden” on a sanctioned state to impact its action in society. Sanctions are thus seen as a non-military tool to handle international disputes and crises (Drezner, 2021). Increased use of sanctions as a form of conflict resolution occurred after the Cold War, particularly in the United Nations, the European Union and the United States foreign policy apparatus. In many countries, there was a growing move away from the use of force solely as a method of dealing with territorial aggression, human rights violations, state-sponsored terrorism and unconstitutional political moves, in favour of sanctions. Sanctions are typically preferred due to the fact that they enable states to put pressure on other states, while avoiding the human and fiscal burden of war (Pape 2020). In many instances, sanctions are employed to diminish the economic resources and political capability of a targeted government; and to ensure opportunities for diplomatic and negotiating efforts (Cortright & Lopez, 2019).

In the field of conflict, economic sanctions are widely adopted means of accomplishing a number of objectives. Coercion has as its goal to force a target state to change a policy or action, using sanctions. Another goal is deterrence - to try to make the costs of further aggressive action more expensive and harmful, thus reducing the likelihood of it happening again. Sanctions also can have symbolic value, such as to signify international condemnation of policies or activities. Drezner (2021) has argued that sanctions are not limited to being economic measures, but also serve as political messages to help create and build international norms and expectations. In this regard, sanctions send a message of collective disapproval and set the price to be paid in the event that the actions are seen as endangering international peace and security (Giumelli, 2021). Economic sanctions have become part of the EU's foreign policy and conflict management approach from 2014 onwards. In the case of Russia, by means of sanctions, it was aimed at the financial sector, trade relations, political circles, export of energy resources, and usage of advanced technologies. According to Portela (2022), the European Union were using sanctions as a viable option to direct military warfare. The sanctions were meant to be an economic and diplomatic pressure on the Russian government with the possibility of diplomacy and international mediation (Sakwa, 2021). Economic sanctions can help "strengthen" the economic power of a target country to halt military operations as part of the conflict resolution process. Trade, finance, and technology barriers can decrease state revenue, affect the industrial production and limit the access to strategic resources for war. Baldwin (2020) stated that sanctions impose an economic cost onto the conflict, and can be a way to incentivize governments to accept negotiation and compromise. For instance, financial sanctions can make states less able to fund military operations or strategic initiatives, and affect the banking sector (Connolly, 2022).

4.3.1 Assessment of the Effectiveness of European Union Sanctions on Russia…

The impact of the EU sanctions against Russia since 2014 and up to 2024 has been a hot topic of discussion among scholars, policy makers and international organizations. The sanctions were aimed at first pressuring Russia to change its policy regarding the annexation of Crimea, the presence of the armed forces in the eastern parts of Ukraine and, in 2022, the extensive invasion of Ukraine. The measures aimed at various areas of the Russian economy such as the financial, trade, energy, technology, transportation, and political realm. The sanctions had some tangible economic and diplomatic effects, but it is not clear how much success they had in fulfilling their more general political and strategic goals. One place the sanctions proved successful is in the damage that they did to the economic ties between Russia and the financial systems of Europe. The major Russian banks saw limitations to their access to capital markets, loans and foreign investment opportunities in Europe. Such limitations, Connolly (2022) notes, limited options for financial maneuverability in the Russian economy and diminished investors' confidence, especially since the imposition of the new sanctions in 2022. Some foreign firms also decided to halt or stop their activities in Russia because of the uncertainty of the sanctions regime and reputation risk linked to the decision to keep doing business in Russia.

The sanctions also helped to push down the Russian currency and financial markets. After the sanctions were tightened after 2022, the Russian ruble has become volatile, and various parts of the economy have seen rising inflation. Restrictions on banking activity, foreign reserves, and international transactions, Guriev and Itskhoki (2023) noted, caused a great deal of pressure upon Russia's financial stability. Russia's freezing of foreign assets in Western institutions severely reduced its financial room for manoeuvre and curtailed some of its international economic relations (Åslund, 2022). One other aspect for which the sanctions seemed to be working was in the curbing of Russia's access to high-tech and industrial machinery. The European Union imposed export restrictions on semiconductors, aviation components, telecommunications and computing technology, software programs and industrial machinery. According to Hanson (2022), these limitations reduced Russia's ability to develop its industries and technology in the long-term, especially in industries that are reliant on imported parts and western technological know-how. This was particularly detrimental to the aviation sector as these restrictions impacted on parts, maintenance systems and technical support provided by European manufacturers. Diplomatic repercussions for Russia also ensued from the sanctions. Some European countries decreased their diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation and the Russian Federation was more politically isolated among certain groups in the international community. The sanctions strengthened European Union solidarity in the areas of territorial sovereignty and international law, Portela (2022) noted. The country's decision to withdraw or limit its presence in some international forums and partnerships was a sign of the wider implications of the sanctions regime on Russia's foreign policy. Furthermore, sanctions indicated collective disapproval of the actions of the Russian military in Ukraine by western countries (Drezner, 2021).

In spite of this, there are some doubts as to the effectiveness of the sanctions overall in meeting the main political aims of the "sanctions". The European Union (EU) had set one of its key objectives of the sanctions regime as shifting Russia's course on Ukraine. Russia, however, had a presence in Crimea and conducted military activities in Ukraine for most of the reporting period. Although sanctions caused economic difficulties, they did not immediately compel Russia to change its policy and strategy choices, Sakwa (2021) noted. Military operations continued in the face of several rounds of sanctions, which brought into question the effectiveness of economic sanctions to bring about a quick resolution to the conflict. Russia has also taken some measures, that lessened the effect of sanctions in some industries. The government boosted domestic production, diversified trade relationships, promoted trade in energy commodities to Asian markets, and promoted economic cooperation with countries like China, India, Iran and Turkey. These changes allowed Russia to lessen its reliance on European markets and somewhat mitigate the impact of trade and financial restrictions, as Allison (2022) explained. Some parts of the sanctions were undermined by Russia's capacity to shift its energy exports and develop other diplomatic ties. The sanctions were less effective because of the varying degree of international support. Many of the other big economies were not fully involved in the sanctions, which were backed by the member states of the E.U., the United States, Canada and some allied countries. China and India were still active in conducting economic relations with Russia, especially in energy field. Sanctions are more likely to have an impact when they are universally adopted and when there are few other avenues for economic engagement, according to Baldwin (2020). The pressure on the Russian economy was thus diminished as a result of being able to sell into non-Western markets...

4.3.2 Impact of the Sanctions on the Russia–Ukraine Conflict..

Sanctions against Russia from 2014 to 2024 had a strong political, economic and diplomatic effect on the Russia–Ukraine conflict. The purpose of the sanctions was to make it difficult for Russia's economy to sustain its military efforts, to exert pressure on the Russian government to come to the table and comply with international law, and to weaken its economy. Portela (2022) notes that the sanctions made it more costly for the conflict and showed a united opposition to Russia's actions in Ukraine by the Europeans. One noticeable effect of the sanctions was the reduction of the economic influence that Russia had on Europe. Trade, finance and technological limitations limited the extent to which Russia had access to Western markets and put pressure on key sectors of the Russian economy (Connolly, 2022). The sanctions also helped to strengthen political and military ties between Ukraine and the Western nations. Following the escalation of the conflict in 2022, military support, financial aid, and diplomatic backing for Ukraine have all stepped up (Allison, 2022).

The other sanctions imposed also helped to isolate Russia diplomatically from parts of the international community. The level of political involvement with Moscow was lowered by a number of European countries, and international organisations began to limit Russian involvement in other activities. The sanctions further reinforced international condemnation of Russia's military operations and bolstered support for Ukraine's territorial sovereignty, Drezner (2021) writes. There was a continuation of the conflict during the reporting period despite these measures. Russia continued to be militarily involved in Ukraine and at the same time increased its ties with the non-Western countries, including China and India (Sakwa, 2021). This situation indicated that while sanctions did lead to more economic and diplomatic pressure, they did not necessarily stop the conflict from occurring, or bring about total political acquiescence by Russia.

Table 4.6: Effects of European Union Sanctions on Russia's Political and Diplomatic Relations..

S/N	Area of Impact	Effect on the Conflict
1	Economic Pressure	Reduced Russia's access to finance, trade, and technology
2	Diplomatic Relations	Increased Russia's political isolation in Europe
3	Military Support to Ukraine	Encouraged greater Western assistance to Ukraine
4	Energy Relations	Reduced dependence on Russian energy exports in Europe
5	International Alliances	Pushed Russia toward stronger ties with non-Western countries
6	Conflict Duration	Conflict continued despite sanctions pressure

Source: Compiled by the researcher from European Union Council Reports (2014–2024)

The table indicates that the sanctions had an impact on a number of aspects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Economic restraints made it more difficult for Russia to access foreign financing, technology and markets, making operations more costly. Diplomatic isolation also had a detrimental impact on political cooperation between Russia and various European countries. The sanctions also provided further impetus to the international support of Ukraine, both diplomatic and in the military and economic fields, from the Western countries. Energy limitations “offset” Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies and Russia in turn invested more in its economic ties with non-Western nations.Europe's energy limitations decreased dependence on Russian energy products, and in return Russia increased its economic ties with non-Western nations. The table also indicates that despite the economic and diplomatic sanctions that were used to pressure Russia, their conflict continued throughout the period. This illustrates that sanctions had a significant impact on the conflict, albeit not necessarily an immediate one in order to achieve total conflict resolution...

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary..

The research analyzed the impact of economic sanctions as a means of conflict resolution in the context of EU sanctions against Russia during 2014-2024. The research was based on the nature of the sanctions, economics and politics in Russia, impact on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and evaluating sanctions as an instrument of international conflict management in general. The "results" revealed that the European Union had established a sweeping sanctions regime against political leaders, energy exports, advanced technology, and trade through financial institutions. The measures have been rolled out incrementally, starting from 2014 when it annexed Crimea and beefing them up significantly after the Ukraine-Russia conflict stepped up in 2022. The sanctions hindered Russia's access to the European capital markets, damaged trade with Western countries, cut down on technology imports and put pressure on its banking, aviation, manufacturing and energy production sectors and many others. The sanctions further helped to create a sense of political isolation and to diminish cooperation among Russia and some Western nations.

The study also found that the sanctions had a significant economic and political impact on Russia. There were financial constraints for significant Russian banks, and lower foreign investment inflows. Trade and technology barriers inhibited manufacturing and reduced access to cutting-edge systems, software, components and avionics. The Russian oil and gas industry was targeted by energy sanctions which imposed restrictions on access to European markets and investment in Russia's energy industry. Diplomatically, the sanctions raised tension between Russia and Western countries, and strengthened the cooperation of Russia with non-western partners (China, India, Iran and Turkey). Russia however adopted a number of measures in response, such as import substitution, reciprocal trade barriers, further force of domestic production, financial restructuring, and diversification of trade and diplomatic policies toward Asian and Middle Eastern countries. On some degree, these measures alleviated some pressure imposed by the sanctions immediately, and allowed Russia to retain some degree of economic resilience under international restrictions.

The results also revealed that the sanctions had a notable impact on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and on the international relations. The measures boosted the economic and political burden of Ukraine's war and enhanced the western support for the nation, both politically and economically. Limits on financial, trading, technological, and energy ties reduced the ability of parts of Russia's economy to engage with the Europeans and exacerbated diplomatic isolation among European countries. But the scholars' research has concluded that the sanctions have not immediately stopped the conflict nor forced Russia to radically change its position towards Ukraine. The fact military operations were continued after each series of sanctions was imposed has highlighted the value of economic sanctions as a direct means of ensuring speedy political compliance and conflict resolution.

The study also confirmed that economic sanctions are still considered to be one of the primary tools of international diplomacy and conflict management, especially since they serve as an alternative to military force. Sanctions are measures designed to apply economic and political pressure on the government(s) of targeted states and/or restrict trade, finance, technology and cooperation with these states by means of restrictions. However, the conclusions indicated that there are certain factors that hinder the effectiveness of sanctions in resolving conflicts. They include the weakness of international cooperation, the possibilities for alternative economic relationships of certain countries (targeted countries), the consequences of sanctions for humanitarian activities and civilian populations, retaliatory measures, and the feasibility of economic adjustment strategies to sanctions in the sanctioned countries. The study found that while the EU sanctions imposed a significant economic, political and diplomatic burden on Russia from 2014 to 2024, to successfully endorse their ultimate objective of full political compliance and rapid conflict resolution, some internal and external obstacles remained.

5.2 Conclusion..

The European Union (EU) sanctions on Russia from 2014–24 analyzed in this study offer a concrete example of the economic sanctions tool in conflict resolution. This study was to conclude that the sanctions greatly impacted Russia's economy, political ties, commerce, financial markets, and technologies accessing. The restrictions made economic cooperation between Russia and European countries more difficult and might have created a starting impediment for diplomatic relations inside the international system. In addition, the study found that the sanctions had an impact on the Russia–Ukraine conflict by contributing to economic pressure on the Russia and boosting political and military backing to Ukraine presented by the West countries. But, even by the end of the observation period, the conflict continued, and this experience demonstrated that economic sanctions for certain countries are not enough to bring about an immediate political compliance or speed up a successful peace process. Some of the effects of the sanctions were somewhat lessened when Russia was able to develop alternative trade partnerships and to take countermeasures to these sanctions. Last but not least, the study found that economic sanctions are still important tools in international diplomacy as they give alternative options to military conflict. However, they are regularly underutilized due to low rates of regional and international cooperation, humanitarian impacts, counterproductive policies, other economic partnerships and the ability of affected countries to withstand them. Therefore, the study concluded that the European Union sanctions had put substantial pressure on the Russian economy and economy overall between 2014 and 2024, but that such pressure had been insufficient in itself to bring about full resolution of the conflict..

5.3 Recommendation..

The following recommendations are made based on the result of this study:

1. Since the study found that European Union sanctions significantly affected Russia's financial system, trade activities, and access to international markets between 2014 and 2024, the European Union should continue to design targeted financial and trade sanctions that focus on strategic sectors and key decision-makers while minimizing adverse effects on ordinary citizens and global economic stability.
2. To enhance the economic effect of the sanctions, the European Union and its international partners should increase coordination in the implementation and enforcement of the sanctions programme. More cooperation among key economies would limit the scope available to sanctioned states to circumvent restrictions by other trade channels and via third-party trade partners or intermediaries and financial systems.
3. In view of the influence of the sanctions on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine by putting additional economic and political pressure on Russia, the European Union is recommended to complement the sanctions with continued diplomatic engagement, mediation and directed peace talks to reach a peaceful solution for the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.
4. International institutions, especially the United Nations and the European Union, should consider promoting wider involvement of other groups in the process of solving the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This would open up the avenues for wider international involvement which would enhance the scope of diplomatic action towards a durable peace.
5. The European Union should regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of its sanctions regime to make sure that the policy goals are being met. More regular evaluation will assist in the recognition of areas of weakness, in the improvements of implementation strategies and the maximization of sanctions as means for conflict management and international peace.

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