



Informal Cross-Border Trade Dynamics in Chad within ECOWAS Region,

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Abstract

Informal cross-border trade plays a significant role in regional integration efforts within ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), particularly in Chad, which is characterized by its geographic location and socio-economic challenges. The research employs a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews with key informants such as traders, government officials, and non-governmental organizations working in cross-border trade sectors. Data collection was conducted through face-to-face meetings and online surveys to gather detailed insights into the informal trade practices within Chad's borders. Findings indicate a significant proportion (75%) of all cross-border transactions are unregulated, highlighting the need for formalizing these activities to support regional integration goals. Key themes emerging from interviews include challenges such as border bureaucracy and lack of enforcement mechanisms. The study concludes that while informal trade is prevalent in Chad's cross-border interactions with ECOWAS member states, it hinders effective regional integration efforts by undermining the established regulatory frameworks. This necessitates a concerted effort to formalize these transactions to enhance economic cooperation within the region. Recommendations include advocating for the establishment of a unified regulatory body responsible for overseeing cross-border trade activities in Chad and neighboring countries, as well as enhancing border management systems to facilitate smoother transaction processes.

Keywords: *Geographical Indicators, Cross-Border Studies, Ethnography, Migration Patterns, Regional Integration, Market Dynamics, Informal Economy*

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