



Informal Cross-Border Trade Dynamics within ECOWAS in Mozambique: A Mixed-Methods Inquiry

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Abstract

Informal cross-border trade (ICT) is a significant aspect of regional integration in Africa, particularly within Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Despite its importance, ICT dynamics in Mozambique remain understudied, highlighting the need for further investigation. The mixed-methods approach combines qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys to gather comprehensive data on ICT within ECOWAS in Mozambique. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with trade stakeholders, while a stratified random sample of traders was surveyed using an online questionnaire. A notable finding is the significant proportion (45%) of traders who reported engaging in informal cross-border transactions across ECOWAS regions, indicating substantial regional integration despite formal barriers. The study also revealed that younger and female traders are more likely to engage in ICT. The mixed-methods inquiry underscores the complexity and diversity of informal cross-border trade dynamics within ECOWAS in Mozambique, providing insights into the socio-economic impacts and policy recommendations for enhancing regional integration efforts. Policy makers should consider implementing targeted interventions aimed at supporting young and female traders to boost ICT engagement. Additionally, there is a need for more inclusive policies that facilitate cross-border trade without compromising regulatory frameworks. Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICT), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mozambique, Regional Integration

Keywords: *African Geography, Regional Integration, Quantitative Methods, Qualitative Research, Cross-Cultural Studies, Ethnography, Community Development*

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