



Informal Cross-Border Trade and Regional Integration in ECOWAS: A Comparative Study in Nigeria,

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Abstract

Informal cross-border trade plays a crucial role in regional integration within ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), particularly in Nigeria's economy. The study employs a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative data analysis from official trade statistics with qualitative interviews to gather insights into local business practices and perceptions of cross-border commerce. A notable finding is the significant proportion (35%) of total exports originating from informal cross-border transactions, highlighting its importance as an economic driver in Nigeria's ECOWAS region. The research underscores the necessity for formalizing these informal trade practices to enhance regional integration and economic stability within ECOWAS. Policy recommendations include developing supportive infrastructure for cross-border commerce, implementing transparent trade policies, and enhancing market access opportunities. Informal Cross-Border Trade, Regional Integration, ECOWAS, Nigeria, Economic Development

Keywords: *Geography, Africa, Nigeria, ECOWAS, EconomicCommunity, SocialScience, IntegrationStudies*

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