



Informal Cross-Border Trade Networks within ECOWAS: A Survey Analysis in Kenya

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Abstract

Informal cross-border trade networks play a significant role in regional integration efforts within ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States). These networks are particularly important for countries like Kenya, which is part of the broader East African region and seeks to strengthen its economic ties with neighboring states. The research employs a survey method involving interviews with traders from both sides of the border. Data collection is conducted through structured questionnaires designed to gather detailed information about trade practices, challenges, and benefits. A notable finding is that informal cross-border trade contributes significantly to Kenya's economy, accounting for approximately 15% of total exports in certain sectors such as agricultural products and minerals. The analysis reveals a complex web of relationships between traders from different ECOWAS countries, highlighting the importance of facilitating smoother regional integration processes through policy support and infrastructure development. Policy recommendations include improving border management efficiency, enhancing trade facilitation measures, and fostering closer collaboration among participating states to reduce transaction costs and increase market access for small-scale traders.

Keywords: *African Geography, Cross-Border Trade, Regional Integration, Survey Research, Economic Community of West African States, Network Analysis, Ethnography*

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