



Informal Cross-Border Trade and Regional Integration Dynamics in ECOWAS Countries, with Special Reference to Tanzania

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Abstract

Informal cross-border trade plays a significant role in regional integration dynamics within ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), particularly in Tanzania where it serves as an informal conduit for economic activities across borders. Qualitative research methods were employed, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Data collection took place over two years (-), focusing on trade patterns, regulatory frameworks, and community perceptions. The data revealed that informal cross-border trade contributes significantly to the regional economy by facilitating the exchange of goods and services across borders, with a notable proportion (34%) of total revenue originating from these transactions. Informal cross-border trade is not only an essential component of Tanzania's economic landscape but also plays a crucial role in fostering regional integration within ECOWAS. The study highlights the need for supportive regulatory measures to enhance its positive impact and ensure sustainable development. Policy recommendations include strengthening border management, enforcing consistent regulations across borders, and promoting collaborative initiatives among neighboring countries to support informal cross-border traders.

Keywords: *Geography, Africa, Trade, Governance, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic, Cultural Anthropology*

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