



Informal Cross-Border Trade Networks within ECOWAS Region: Implications for Regional Integration in Libya

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Abstract

Informal cross-border trade networks play a significant role in regional integration within the ECOWAS region, including Libya. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with local traders and analysis of existing trade records. A thematic approach was used to categorize and analyse the data. The analysis reveals a significant proportion (75%) of cross-border transactions are conducted informally, highlighting the need for formalizing these networks to enhance regional integration. Informal trade networks hinder effective regional integration in Libya. Recommendations include supporting formalization initiatives and policy reforms that promote fairer trading practices across borders. Support the development of a comprehensive regulatory framework to govern cross-border trade, ensuring transparency and fairness for all parties involved.

Keywords: *West Africa, Informal Economy, Cross-Cultural Studies, Regionalism, Mercantile Networks*

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