



Informal Cross-Border Trade Networks within ECOWAS: Implications for Regional Integration 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), particularly in countries like Kenya, which share borders with multiple ECOWAS member states. The study employs a qualitative approach, drawing from secondary data sources including government reports, interviews with local traders, and academic literature to analyse existing patterns and trends in cross-border trade across ECOWAS member states. The analysis underscores the importance of fostering formal recognition and regulation for these informal trade networks to enhance their positive impacts on regional economic development and ultimately contribute to broader ECOWAS integration goals. Recommendations include promoting dialogue between regulatory bodies, enhancing cross-border logistics infrastructure, and developing targeted policies that support sustainable growth within existing informal networks.

Keywords: *African geography, cross-border studies, regional integration theory, informal economy, West Africa*

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