

INTEGRATION AND TRADE IN WEST AFRICAN SUB REGION: A STUDY OF THE POST COLONIAL PERIOD

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Abstract: *Integration and Trade are special competitive phenomenon that must exist to each other valid. Prior to the colonial days trade as always existed between the West African States and their colonial giants. However, it is no longer news that during this era trade was not of mutual benefits essence due to the experiences of cheap export from colonies and cost import from colonial masters. It is `within this vein that foreign nations of the western states gain much financial prowess above the African states, thus trade in west in African could be liken to clientele approach were west African countries are not free to be equal partners in business. This and many other glaring effects of colonialism led to a home front fight against the shackles of colonialism that within the region. With so many decades of decolonization in Africa there is supposed to be a better life, good governance, peace and equal as well as competitive development and advancement with other western societies. Moreover, this can only be achieved through effective trade and collective integration within the sub region as no nation, people or continent can thrive better without integrative togetherness. This resonate a drive to thoroughly investigate the extent of integration and trade in the west African sub region even after independence has been achieved as a people and as a continent. The study synthesizes its discovery from primary and secondary sources of data, with this it was established that even after independence has been achieved west African states still struggles with real achievement as far as trade and integration are concern. Some of the reasons behind the setback are: debt relief, membership of other foreign organizations, crisis and political instability, lack of modern technology among others. The paper recommends that: Africa should continue to be as the center piece of her foreign policy, trade barriers should be eradicated and a common currency among others.*

Introduction

Integration is a phenomenon that has been gaining ground in the world. It can be seen in the American's in the forms of custom union like Mercosur (South America) or a free trade area like NAFTA (North America) and a Common Market in Europe with the European Union and Regional cooperation in Asia known as ASEAN. It therefore, comes as no surprise that Africa would be on the verge of the development of an African Union (AU) with gross aims to be a common market similar to that of the European Union. The major building blocks for this union are the regional integration groups that have been established throughout the continent. This portend to show the various needs why countries of the world exist to form a coalition of various blows to pull resources together for the purpose of national and regional bonding to enhance effective development and help among them. Trade as a phenomenon is ubiquitous among people, as there must be exchange of goods and services, producers and consumer relationships, investment and the investor for the overwhelming development of the people of a place as well as world politics. Hence, the need for integrative ambitions and activities even at sub regional level. However, trade is crucial for economic growth in the West African Sub region which has

a huge potentials for trade both in global and intra-regional terms as a result of its natural resource endowment which include agricultural potentials.

However, the benefits of regional trade and economic integration cannot be over-emphasized. These include the opportunities to reap trade efficiency, gains, exploit economies of scale and reduce the thickness of borders (De melo and Isikate, 2014). The term regional trade integration is an agreement among countries in a geographical region to reduce tariffs and non-tariffs barriers to free flow of goods, services and factors of production among economic and geographical heterogeneous nature of the countries in the region with disparities varying from countries with low to medium island countries. It also offers opportunities to leverage and extend economics comparative advantage at regional level in ways not accessible through national programmes (Mbekeani, 2013). These activities are achieved through a regional economic community (REC) saddled with the responsibility of implementation of regional trade agreement policies such as free trade agreement (FTA), customs union (CU) Common Market (CM), Economic Union (EU) and political unions. Thus, the first primary policy of every REC is the implementation of free Trade Agreement an arrangement that remove all barriers to trade in goods and services among member countries in order to promote regional trade. It is apt to mention that the Economic Community of West African States was one of the birth for trade integration in the West African Sub-Region. It was established by the ECOWAS treaty of Lagos, 1975. It is of no vile to mention that the body is an outcome of continuous quest to better the people of the region through enhancement of trade among them as nations are meant to pull resources together for a better regional development. with the creation of ECOWAS as a body nation state are now oblige to keep to standard protocols of operation as there must an existing code of conduct for every member in order to ensure orderliness and effective control.

Statement of the Problem

The history of trade and monetary integration in the West African Sub region can be described as the agitator for the creation of the ECOWAS as a body with the aim of serving as a turning point to re-organize the region social-political and economic ties which had been hitherto distorted by colonialism consequently, the primary goals was to attempt to redefine the former realities and paradigms placed upon countries within the sub-region in the light of current realities prevalent in the practices of member states. The West African sub region see ECOWAS as a goal to correct the problems created by colonial in-exactitudes which divided the region into different exclusive markets. These in-exactitudes limited mode of transaction and means of exchange or payment problem, ill-defined borders, restrictions to movement, trade barriers and many more. Therefore, the organization became the imperative to transcend the structural limitations and the divisible colonial legacies (Obi, 1998). Consequently, at its formation the ECOWAS showed considerable promises as a regional organization that could promote and overtime lay the foundation for monetary and trade integration among member states especially the adoption of ECOWAS monetary programme (ECMP) in 1987 was to integrate the economy of all states and promote trade in the region, leading to the attainment of an economy union through the adoption of a common currency (Article 4, ECOWAS protocol 1975). This is large due to the low level of intra-regional trade among member states both

import and export trade has remained lower than 12% in recent years and intra-regional exports of ECOWAS member have oscillated between 10.1% in 1980 and in 2014 (UNCIAD Statistics, 2015).

This with the establishment of ECOWAS and the introduction of ECMP the region has not achieved lofty height among member states due to the post-colonial cleavages in the region which include the continuation of colonial practice among the age long trade linkage with formal colonial metropolis. The extent to which this politics has affected the pattern of trade in favour of the developed countries of the West is indeed worrisome. It is therefore safe to mention that trade integration is not novel to Africa. This paper therefore serve as an investigative study on integration and trade in the West African Sub-region.

Objectives of the Study

This paper seeks to

- i. Examine the History of Integration in West Africa
- ii. Theories of Regional Integration in West Africa Sub-Region
- iii. Integration and trade in West African: The Post-Colonial Period

Aim of the study

This study seeks to examine integration and trade in the west Africa Sub- region for countries such as Nigeria, Burkinafaso, Cote d'ivoire, Guinea Niger, Senegal, Mali, and Benin.

Significance of the study

This Study is significance in various ways as most literature has been created on the body of ECOWAS as the regional outfit created as a mechanism or tool that will foster the promotion of trade within the region. However, it is the aim of the paper to fill the gap of existing literature by usefully providing insight and tool that enhanced integration and economic trade in the west Africa sub region. The emphasis of this work is to continuously jingle the bell of togetherness to fight the spirit of backwardness that that has laced every fabric of regional development that pervade the region. The work will be of help to policy makers, administrators, minister, and president of sovereign nations to further bring a collaborative effort that will emanate from the various state or people. It would also contribute significantly to the body of existing knowledge in literature. Thereby providing academic researchers in this field of study on relevant materials needed for more research analysis implementation of basic recommending will move the Africa sub region and it people inorder to share equal pride among nations in the world.

Strength and limitation of the study

This study is one of the foremost Socratic thought that ponders much on the advancement of the West Africa sub region. As a region it has several receding factors which impede its place of equality among neighboring state. This birth a driving force to center the study on the trade and integration because it is unarguable to mention that trade and integration are the only factor that can move a region forward. However, the study has a few draw back such as the inability to obtain a complete record or information and the divergent obstacle as regards reaching out to government personalities one on one due to bureaucratic gate keeping that exist in government organization. Another possible

limitation could be the inability to take into cognizance the place of crisis ridden situation that pervades some west African states which can serve as an obvious distraction.

Suggestion for further studies

Base on the limitation and finding of this study, the following suggestion for further research are hereby outline. The study was focus on trade and integration with attendant factors that inhibit it in the region. The cumbersomeness of a systems as well as bureaucratic practice by the divergent government practice by member states may have cause impediment to the flow of trade within the region. The study also did not take into cognizance the possible nature of the political clime which has to do with stability as well as systemic policies. Moreover much of historical emergence was also not touched. Therefore, future research should be much centered on these areas of study.

Implication of the study for practice or policy

- i This paper hope to provide a useful insight on the need for individual nation state or nation to consider or look inward internally instead of over reliance on foreign bodies.
- ii The need for countries to boost their trade and economic endowment by diversifying their products.
- iii The basis for a common hegemony among nations within the sub region
- iv The study contribute significantly to the body of existing knowledge on trade and integration.

Review of Related Literature

Integration in West African Sub-Region: Historical Epoch Pre-colonial History:

In the historical context, integration is not something that is new in West Africa. It has been noted by some historians that pre-colonial history shows political and economic integration through limited trade and free movement of factors of production throughout various kingdoms in this region (Paker, 2002). The notion of precise geographic boundaries is profoundly new or alien to Africa's historical and cultural traditions, this perhaps informed the reason why West Africans later push so strongly for integration in the Twenty first century.

Colonial History

Pre-colonial history is not the only link that West Africans have had leading towards integration. The colonization of the African States during the 19th century can be regarded as the background to the current historic and economic integration efforts in Africa (Schaffer, 2002) in fact dating all the way of the 19th century, West Africans have felt a much European presence in the 17th century, the French had set-up trading posts at the month of the Senegal river. However, West Africans felt the largest colonial impact by the French. Between 1854 and 1865, the French had captured interior Senegal, southern Mauritania and the present day Mali. Throughout the 1860s France was busy setting up trade and military post on the coasts of Benin, Guinea and Cote D'Ivoire (Glickman, 1988). By the late 1890's France formally established French West Africa states comprised of Cote d'ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Burkna Faso, Senegal, Mali and Benin (then Dahomey in

1905) Mauritania had become French protectorate but by 1920 it joined French West Africa as a colony (Glickman, 1988). These nations known as a collective French West Africa states became what is known today as the *communaute Financiere Africaine* meaning African Financial Community (CFA).

The Introduction of the CFA France

This was to ease the transaction cost of traders within the region, which led to the establishment of the French CFA currency in 1939 and was fully convertible into the French francs at a fixed exchange rate (Kouyate, 2005). However, following the decolonization in 1958, France offered the former colonies an opportunity to join the French community. Guinea as a country opted out but the rest joined this community whose aim was to provide cooperation among other common issues such as foreign affairs, defense and higher education. This led to the creation of two banks in 1962 which dealt with countries within this alliance. The CFA countries experienced positive GDP growth in 1996 and 1997. The Bank of Africa present in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'ivoire, Mali and Niger and Ecobank present in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D' Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Guinea and Senegal have benefitted from the common CFA currency and reporting to a single central bank (Morg, 2003). It also makes it easier for CFA countries to have access to European financial markets. The CFA currency enabled a common trade among former colonies of French west African countries.

Theories of Regional Integration

Functional Theory

David Mitrany the father of Functional Theory put a strong case in support of functional cooperation. His main argument was that functional cooperation could eventually enmesh national government as a dense network of interlocking cooperative venture which would lead to greater understanding and peaceful co-existence. According to him, within this framework, function, form and role can be determined by their organizational framework and when economic goals are realized, citizens will lose their loyalties to their respective primordial sovereign countries as emphasis now shift from political issues which divide to those social issues that birth collective interest. Military observed that violence, wars and various forms of insecurity and political instability that characterized the Second World War period had their deep roots in the social and economic needs of the people in the word of mitrany. The task that is facing us is how to build up the reality of a common interest in peace not a peace that would tear the nation quietly apart, but a peace that would bring them actively together not the old static and strategic view of it but a working peace. According to mitrany's postulations once the ground work has been established within the frame work of functional integration, forces will be set in motion which will overlay forces of divisions with a spreading web of international activities and agencies through which the interest and life of all nations would gradually be integrated. Thus, as government cooperate in the social and economic sectors and secede more and more of their task to these worldwide international organization trade and economic unification would not only promote a working peace but would build the foundation for broader political agreement as well. The concept of ramification is central to Mitrany's thesis that collaboration in one sector will lead to collaboration in another. That is

functional cooperation in one sector, resulting from a felt need generates the need for functional collaboration in another sector. It seems that while functionalism and federalism are two different strategies, there exists a common ground. Their ultimate objective is to supersede the sovereign nation state by peaceful means with an international organization better developed to assure peace and prosperity for the people. (Gerhand, 1973).

The NEO Functionalist Approach.

In the 1950's Ernst Hass developed modified incursion of mitrany's functionalist thesis after a study of operation of a European coal and steel corporation. The modification by Hass was adduced to be Neo-functionalist and it has been widely accepted and adopted to explain the integration process. The neo-functionalist analyzed the process of European integration by comparing the behavior of an actor in a regional setting to the modern pluralist nation state motivated by self-interest and argued that there is a continuous between economic and political union that the two are fused by an automatic politicization (spillovers) where in actors are involve in their incremental process of decision making beginning with economic and social matters (welfare maximization) and gradually moving to the political sphere. Scholars like Hass, Deutsh, Nye and Schitter have identified several necessary condition for integrative ventures. Deutsh grouped these conditions into three which are pluralistic security communities, those that are essential for amalgamated but helpful for a pluralistic community and those considered to be helpful for security communities (Karl Dentch, 1959). Nye (1971) also classified these conditions under structural conditions and perceptual condition. However, Hass and Schmitter (1966) identified four background conditions which include size of units, rate of transactions among units, extent of pluralism and degree complementary of elite values. The Neo-functionalist school take the existence of a supernatural institution as a condition for effective problem-solving, the establishment of a supranational authority that undermines the independence of the nation states is likely to result in political actors shifting their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards new centre, were institutional possess a demand jurisdiction over a pre-existing national states (Enrst, 1958).

Customs Unit Theory

Although the Neo-functionalist approach predominantly influences integration initiatives of the less developed societies, the approach itself derives its strength from the traditional custom union theory. According to Viner (1950) the primary purpose of a custom union is to shift sources of supply. This shift may be to lower cost or raise them high. According to him, economic integration is favourable and beneficial only if a balancetrade creation effects outweigh the trade diversion in effects. Trade creation occurs when members of an economic union turn to low cost producers in other countries to buy the goods they themselves previously produced at high cost. Trade diversion take place when members of economic union reduce their imports from low cost supplies outside the union in order to purchase the same products at a higher cost which is concealed by the common external tariff from within the union (Lipsay, 1950). The vinerian approach argues that trade creation can be achieved if member countries are initially competitive but potentially complimentary in trade, if an intra-regional trade in proportion to total trade is relatively high and the ratio of foreign to domestic commerce is low it shows a custom

union is of a wide advantage particularly where their economy are of a competitive and complementary advantage.

Dependency Theory and Economic Integration

This work adopts the dependency theory to properly analyze this subject of discourse. The dependency school has argued for a re-conceptualization of the purpose of integration schemes in third world. According to this school, economic integration should aim at creating economic stimulus among member states as an alternative development strategy that will enhance rapid trade and economic development to eliminate underdevelopment. Scholars such as Andrew Axline, Lynn Mytelka, Timothy Shaw, Asante S.K, Ralph Onwuka, Stephen Wright and AmaduSesay (1988) now consider serious the conditioning impact of enormous factors on the process of integration among third world formations. Their view centers on the hegemonic input and dominant influence of the western countries on westAfrican Countries which have conditioned and determined the outcome of integration arrangement (Onwuka, 1991). The failure of integration schemes in Africa is thus evident from the fact that all African countries, individually and collectively remain that they are among themselves. It is of no news that the traditional validity of the dependency school has emphasized the dangers in over-capitalization of integration scheme and the result of the imposition of transplanted market conditions into the African continent to see foreign interest forces such as the IMF and factors like the debt crisis and the activities of the TNCs have been identified by dependency theorists as imperialist agents for the reproduction of conditions of dependence in Africa (Onwuka, 1991). As liberative efforts, indices such as network of power, knowledge and information which are not equally distributed for all integrating countries serve as an impediments towards equilibrating conditions. In the work of Vaitos (1992) integration is built around key issues areas such as the local folio economic and political interest, influence of foreign government and private interest, the relationship between structural characteristics and choice of integration scheme and key issues relating to process and duration of integration stages, the peculiar nature of trade and the requirements of inter-counting distributional considerations.

Trade and Monetary Integration in West African States During Colonialism

It is of grand premium in this work to emphasized the place of monetary integration as it affect trade in West African which shall be digested in this work. Scholars such as Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) provide a penetrating exposure on the economic impact of monetary integration and their consequences for trade in West Africa especially, the use of monetary relations to institute how the colonial powers demands trade and their control over the emerging economics through their role in France zone, for them monetary system was another effective instrument or strategy by the colonialists to take direct control and political administration of the West African territories. Consequently, it was therefore easy for the Europeans to regulate the use and value of the currency as a means of maintaining effective control of the West African economy. In addition to the central, the colonial masters made the currency difficult by making the prices of raw materials and agricultural produced in Africa to be cheap. Moreover, the prices of goods manufactured by the colonialist were allowed to be costly. Consequently Africans were forced to import the

foreign goods at highly expensive prices. The implication of this was that while Africans kept on becoming poorer, the colonial powers kept on increasing since the currency used in the African territories was controlled by the colonialist as they determined the nature of the development of West African economy (Oniolara, 2018). In a similar vein, Dan Chukwu (2010) analyses the *raison-d'être* for the introduction of British Currency in West Africa under economic and political factors. On the political front, the British currency was introduced to provide a stable, portable means of payment to a retinue of staff and British political agents as they engaged in the process of colonial conquest and administration in West Africa towards the end of the nineteenth century.

These agents according to him include troops and police officers engaging in the pacification of the region. Chukwu further posits that British currency was introduced to meet the challenges posed by an expansion in the economic activities between Nigeria and Great Britain in the second half of the Nineteenth Century and opening years of the twentieth century. However, Chukwu and Onyekpe (2014) are of the view that European colonial rule, especially in West Africa where the British and the French dominated the greater part of the Colonial period created a clientele of loyalists. This can be confirmed by their action in 1994 when Euro-centric decisions aimed at retaining France domination in the region led to the creation of the CFA monetary zone for Francophone countries. This implication was a subtle return to what the situation was in the 1930s when France created a separate monetary board for its West African colonies leading to the incorporation of the local economy of the West African states (Encyclopedia, 2002).

Establishment of Monetary System in the 18th and 19th Centuries

According to Uche (2001) the establishment of monetary system in the 18th and 19th centuries was a way of establishing currency supremacy in the West African Sub-region. He argues further that the ecological propinquity of the colonies shaped opportunities for economies of scales in monetary transactions in the region, with this the colonial masters were more interested in developing these colonies for the production of raw materials for their factories and possible markets for their finished products. For the purpose of controlling the region, the colonial government established the currency board system not essentially for the benefit of West African and closer cooperation among the colonies in the sub-region, but presumably because there were immense opportunities for them in terms of economic scale benefit from such a system. Consequently the colonial government did very little to promote the development of inter-colony infrastructures in the region. According to Chibuikwe (2020) it is thus unsurprising that inter-colony trade at that time remained insignificant while Europe remained the major trading partners of all the West African Colonies.

Integration and Trade in West Africa: The Post-Colonial Era

Admittedly, the monetary unions are not usually established for the fun of it on the argument that is a common practice across regions as a fashionable practice. However, available statistics indicate that the continent's actual level of trade is below the level of development and endowment at the disposal of the region. According to Angelo (2015) the total cost volume of trade in West Africa is around 12 to 15 percent, this notify that the share of intra-regional trade among ECOWAS countries compares favourably to several regional economic communities in Africa. According to UNCTAD (2013) a cross

comparison shows that ECOWAS figure stands at 10.7% while West African Economic and Development Monetary Union (WAEMU) stands at 12.8%, the East African Community (SADC) is 16.2% for Southern Common Market while it is 9.6% for Caribbean Community Markets. The story only changes when compared to the European Union Statistics. Thus the dynamics of post-colonial cleavages on monetary integration and trade in ECOWAS cannot be overemphasized. In the words of Mussa (2000) he notes that one of the most important factors responsible for the poor implementation of trade in West Africa is relating to colonial legacies as it indeed appears that political decolonization and formal granting of independence to states in the sub-region have not meant the end to external forces shaping the sub-regions affairs. Undoubtedly, the former colonial block, France and Britain still maintain strong political and economic interests in the sub-region which has contributed to the difficulties facing the region in creating single currency and maintaining a common market. It could be recalled that eight of the fifteen ECOWAS members are French speaking countries which belongs to the West Africa. CFA France as the legal tender for francophone countries. The modest monetary integration success by the francophone West Africa countries have been no doubt aided by France, which has acted as the agency of restraint and external influences to the monetary arrangement. Therefore, the francophone countries may be reluctant to give up the CFA, which is stable and reliable (Uche, 2001). According to Kode (2006) the perpetual age old colonial division between francophone and Anglophone West Africa countries is undoubtedly a fundamental challenge confronting ECOWAS member states today. Consequently, several parts of the region have become client states depending on their force colonial ruler for trade, investment, aid and insecurity. Colonial cleavages operates at the level of colonial structure of governance, colonial model of monetary system, colonial notion of civilization, religion, colonial police and military, colonial marriage model, value system, colonial language as lingua-franca, trade and post-colonial intergovernmental organizations are clear example of post-colonial cleavages in the sub-region.

The impact of growing debt, the economic community weak legal and institutional regimes as well as poor infrastructure within and across the region are major independent to trade and monetary integration in the sub-region. It was also argued that the economic alliances with the Western Powers and the international financial Institutions especially the world bank and international monetary fund are problematic for smooth intra-regional trade and monetary integration in West Africa. Moreover, the World Bank and international monetary fund are instruments for perpetual control of the region by the developed countries. Ordinarily, this ought not to be so but countries of the sub-region lack well established economic and financial institution with clearly articulated templates to leverage or the global silence (Aryeetey and Tarp, 2002). For example the countries under the Economic Recovery Reform (ERP) such as the West Africa countries are required to operate under the directives of World Bank IMF for many years if they are to enjoy any facility of these institutions. A good example is the debt relief initiative with series of conditions which beneficiary countries are expected to comply with. These relieves have terms and conditions which compromise local and regional standards and consequently exposed debt burdened countries to external influence. (Omolara, 2018). No wonder Nugent (2004) argues that the fact that African countries including West Africa have developed a strong connections to the new global players of the developed countries of the world, has led to the failure of independent African countries to restructure their economies

and achieve good governance systems and sustainability in the post colonial era. In the light of the foregoing, it is not surprising that efforts at achieving trade and monetary integration in West African state have failed to yield the desired results. This argument also resonates in the work of Fred Riggs (1994) in his “history of prismatic society” Riggs observed that the infiltration of colonialism and post-colonial practices, the politics and administration of post-colonial west Africa have markedly altered the development pattern of societal growth in developing countries of the world.

Challenges of West Africa Region

According to Chambas (2007) some of the challenges of the West Africa region are as follows:

- Wide Proliferation of small arms and Light weapons
- The estimated 10 million arms that are easily and currently available throughout the community is one of the causes of extended conflict within the region
- Respect for Human Rights and Civil Liberties
- Human rights and civil liberties abuses stem from bad government.
- Elections credibility, transparency and fairness: This has pervade the region and produce a lot of crisis around member state.
- Migration: Most West African youth do not see any future within the region and therefore are risking their lives to reach western world.
- Drug Trafficking: West African countries are seen as soft spot for drug trafficking where organized group use the region as a transport point.
- Global Warming: The region is besiege with severe flooding.

Appraisal of Literature

From the foregoing on the available relevant literature relating to trade and integration in west Africa as reviewed by the researcher revealed that although some researches have been carried out on this subject in recent times but not so many have narrowed to the west Africa sub- region rather they are on the wider Africa continent. It is against this background and scarcity research of work, on this area of study that this work is set to investigate on trade and integration in the West African sub region of Africa.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the expo facto design which allows for a detail and comprehensive information about the subject matter. Interview and research questions are aimed at answering the given research problem.

Research Settings

The focus of this research is on trade and integration in West Africa. The study covers state of the West Africa sub region.

Population of the study

The population of the study is the West Africa Nations within the sub region of Africa continent.

Sampling and Sample Technique

The sampling procedure for the study is the simple random sampling. The decision to employ this method is to create equal chance for all countries.

Instrument of Data collection

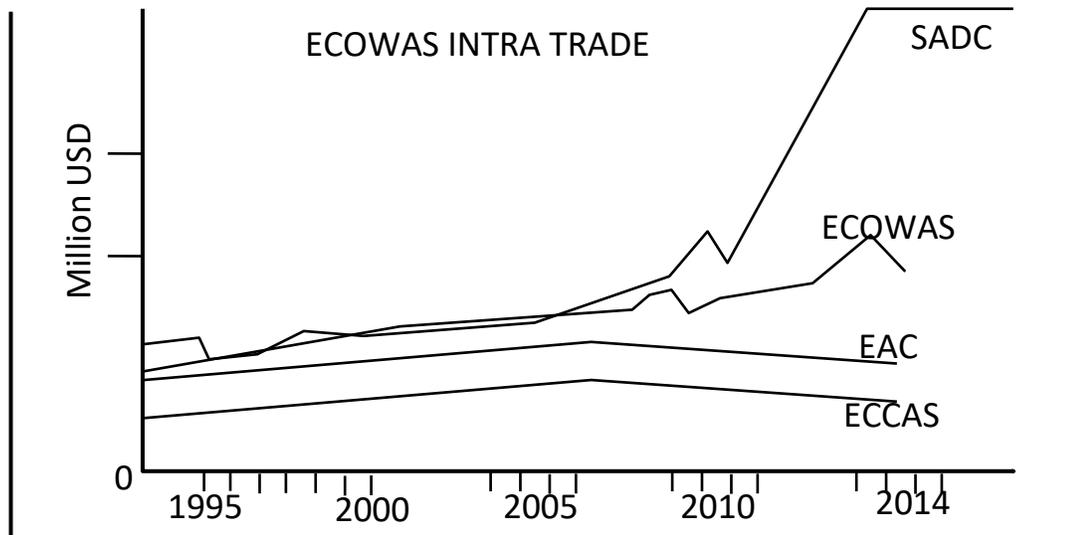
The instrument of data collection is the researchers self developed questionnaire, interview session and relevant statistical record as well as journal publications, text and unpublished thesis. The instrument is concerned with the activities of government and its officials in promoting the region. The focus of the research work is on integrating and trade in the west Africa sub region.

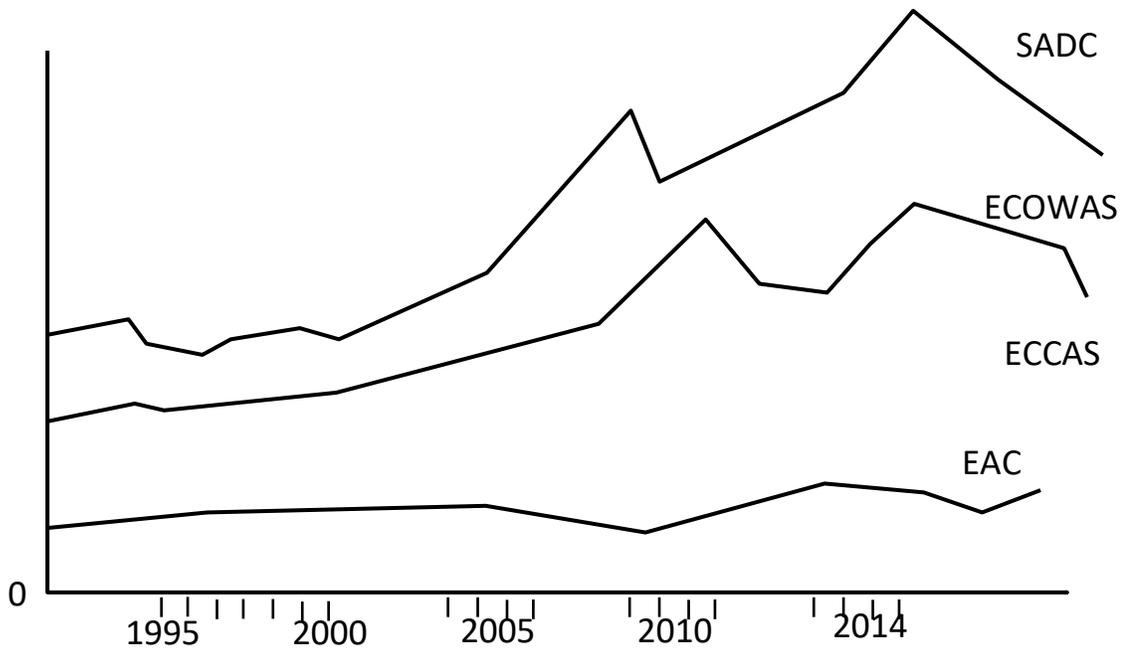
Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

Validity is the measurement of how well a research Instrument examine what it is suppose to examine, it is the extent to which a concept, conclusion or measurement is well founded accurately reflecting the meaning of the concept under study (Babble 2010). In line with standard research practice, validation of the research instrument is to ensure that the DLQP is well founded and adequately measured including the various component of trade and integration among countries of the west Africa region.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

To carry out the data analysis information obtained from the research instruments were analyze using graph to ascertain trade and integration in the West African sub region.





Source: UNDCSTAT

Result of finding

from the direction of the west African sub regional trade with other regional countries in the sub sahara Africa it shows that ECOWAS sub regional trade increased since in early 2000s. However, its rate of increase has been very slow compared to the southern African community.

Conclusion

This study conclude that the idea of integration and trade in West Africa is a lofty goal. However, there remains a number of challenges to be surmounted by the region, which ranges from a common currency, unending, political, religious and ethnic dominance among others. For trade and integration to be enhanced in the west African sub region concerned countries should insist on internal value, growth and attendant development. A better alignment and reconstructed agreement can possibly be reached between the sub region and other international bodies such as IMF and others to pursue goals that won't in turn hinders the advancement of the region despite the cleavages with them. Africa as a continent need to strive among its regional counterpart in the world through efforts at reaching every figment of its people, language, governance and culture to clamour for the onward developmental epoch of the region in other to remove the renter clientele approach that the continent is known. This necessitate the imperative drive and hunger for the region to concentrate hugely on its economic and trade integration as wealth and power or politics are the foundational root for the survival of people and determinant of influence.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are tenable in the study:

The Use of Modern Technology

The availability of technology is one important factor that can influence the pattern and pace of trade and integration in West Africa states. The role of modern means of communication such as the internet should be emphasized in the region. The use of web based internet applications and information technology can help to deliver information and services that may prove pivotal to the growth of public and private business enterprises.

Dealing with Trade Barriers

Despite the free trade agreement among the West African sub region, the practical experience of the problem of trade barriers is alarming. This problem has been contributing to low inter-regional trade among member countries which is invariably having adverse effect on the movement of the region in achieving inclusive development. One of the trade objectives of ECOWAS is to establish a common market through the liberalization of trade by the abolition of custom duties levied on import and export through a trade instrument known as ECOWAS Trade Liberalization scheme (ETLS). The overall designed of the policy was to benefit the private sector, generate employment among member states and increase intra-regional trade. However, the implementation of this policy remain poor, in dealing with this problem, it requires the political willingness on the part of the federal government of all west African states to instruct their respective custom agencies to ensure compliance.

Dealing with the problem of Product Concentration

Most west African states export same primary commodities such as oil which has potential of limiting trade among them. Countries in the west African State should take economic diversification as a serious one or affair among them.

Provision of supportive Infrastructure

The contribution of inadequate infrastructural development is bane to integration and trade in west Africa sub region. Infrastructural structures are needed to ensure self-manufacturing and production of goods and services in the west African sub region.

Political Instability

Most west African states are crisis ridden and done due to several factors that are ethno-religious, leadership and a lot more. The pursuit for peaceful coexistence should be pursued by every west African countries. This will produce a win win situation that will yield an overall positive results or impact on the nations.

Policy Formulation and Implementation

It is understandable that the African continent in general has a lot of cleavages to other western and former colonial allied organization which renders monetary assistance and other form. This alone has become an impediment as mentioned. However, the west African subregion can overcome this impediment if she takes the region as her epicenter in policy formulation and implementation despite the factors that clog her wheels of integration and development. Therefore, elected presidents, stake holders and people of governance and interest should hold an underlining sincere summit that will redirect and refocus policies that will further delineate western strength that bifurcate trade and integration in west African states.

Language Barrier

It is no news that most west African countries are French speaking countries which create an obstacle to communication, behaviour and understanding. west African countries should promote a common medium of communication which could be a possibly English language. This alone will enable brotherhood, oneness and equal understanding of concept as well as way of life that may exist among them.

Enacted Policies

Policies are government statement which reflect government pursued actions and decisions. They are the legal strength which permit government execution and effort without encumbrances or limitations from underlining legal perspective and compliance. Therefore, international trade policies formed by individual nations and presidents should reflect the need, nature, goods and people of sub region so as to give an unalloyed room for free trade, improved product and better profit for the region. This will enable the west African countries to reflect the center piece of trade policies.

Political Leadership

Politics as the driving force of every sector cannot be left untouched. However, there have been a consistent and continuous cry for better leadership acumen in the Africa continent as time without it has always been averred that Africa as a continent is laden with huge resources but left in the hands of bad managers who are met to pilot the affairs, most leaders are always wanting to perpetuate themselves in power despite their woeful failures throughout their leadership span or administrative cycle. Better approach and standard to politics should be set; indices such as educational qualification, age, health status, previous experience as well as residual knowledge should be given proper scrutiny as well as attention for anyone interested in public from the rank and file of governance. This will help to high control the entrance of bad eggs in political positions.

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