

**Cross-Border Logistics Operations and Food Accessibility in the East African
Community**

A Case of Taveta-Holili One-Stop Border Post and Selected Town Markets

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Abstract

Food accessibility is one of the critical pillars of food security that determines the nutritional well-being of a population. However, cross-border logistics barriers within the East African Community (EAC) obstruct the movement of staple foods from surplus-producing countries to those experiencing food shortages. The study was carried out due to the recent cross-border logistical challenges that have been experienced by traders while moving staple foods across borders in EAC, particularly between Kenya and Tanzania. This study employed a mixed-method approach by collecting quantitative and qualitative data to leverage the strengths of each method while minimizing their weaknesses. Also, a cross-sectional design was adopted since data was gathered at a single point in time. Data was collected through a survey of 379 respondents and key informant interviews (KIIs) who are experts in cross-border logistics and trade. The respondents included traders, clearing agents, logistics service providers, and customs officials at Taveta-Holili One-Stop Border Post (OSBP), Taveta, Mwatate, and Voi town markets. Quantitative data was analysed using an ordinal logistic regression model for all four objectives of the study while descriptive statistics were used to analyse the socio-economic demographic characteristics of the respondents. On the other hand, qualitative data was carefully analysed using a content analysis method, emphasizing thematic categorization. The findings revealed the effect of cross-border logistics operations on food accessibility. All the variables tested demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship, except for the integration of customs technology, coordination among customs officials, and functional and operational equipment. Thus, it was concluded that cross-border timeliness, customs clearance procedures, logistics service facilitation, and regulatory compliance affect food accessibility within the EAC. The study recommended that EAC member states should fully integrate their web-based customs platforms through the Single Window (e-SW) system, harmonize the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures on staple foods, fast-track the removal of all non-tariff barriers that undermine the regional integration agenda, and invest in infrastructure that

will support the efficiency of cross-border logistics operations. They should also invest in monitoring systems that track the performance of these investments to identify areas for improvement. Their implementation will enhance food accessibility in the region by eliminating the physical, regulatory, and economic barriers that prevent consumers from accessing adequate amounts of nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs.

Keywords: Border, logistics, food accessibility, East African Community, town markets,