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Effects of Non-Tariff Barriers on Promotion of East African Community Integration: A Case of Magasins Généraux du Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

Regional integration in East Africa has proven to strengthen investments within member nations. However, differing non-tariff barrier policies among East African Community (EAC) partner states have posed significant challenges to progress. This study assessed the effects of non-tariff barriers on the promotion of EAC integration, using Magasins Généraux du Rwanda (MAGERWA) as a case study. Specifically, the study evaluated the effects of technical barriers to trade, analysed the impact of import quotas, and scrutinised the effects of foreign exchange restrictions on EAC integration. The study was anchored in three theories: Liberal Intergovernmentalism Theory, Economic Integration Theories, and the Heckscher-Ohlin Theory. It used a descriptive research design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population consisted of 2,045 individuals. A sample size of 335 was determined using the Yamane formula and selected through both simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected using a questionnaire survey and analysed using SPSS version 26. Bivariate analysis, including P-values, was used to evaluate the relationship between independent and dependent categorical variables. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, as well as single and multiple logistic regression models, were used to assess the strength of the relationships. A p-value < 0.05 and a 95% confidence interval were used for inference. Results were presented in frequency and cross-tabulation tables. The study found that technical barriers to trade had a statistically significant relationship with the promotion of EAC integration (r = 0.953, p<0.05). Similarly, import quotas showed a significant relationship with EAC integration (r = 0.954). Foreign exchange limitations also demonstrated a significant correlation with EAC integration, with a correlation coefficient of.966. The regression analysis showed a mean square of 199.267 and a residual mean square of 0.107, with an F-value of 1864.147 and a p-value of.000b. The researcher suggested that EAC member states should implement the planned goals of the community to promote free trade in the region, thereby enhancing economic integration.

Key words: East African Community, Integration, Magasins Généraux du Rwanda, Non-Tariff Barriers, Promotion

I. INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) was established as the world's first regional economic bloc in 1993 when the Maastricht Treaty was signed. Following the establishment of market integration inside the European Union, regional integration gained popularity and is currently a global trend. Maxwell et al. (2014) claim that the North American countries pursued integration as a result of the European Union's expansion, which resulted in the first agreement being signed in 1992 and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) being established in 1994. A single economy within the African Economic Community (AEC) was the aim of African integration, which was a response to the regional challenges the continent faced as a result of its small number of national markets and landlocked countries. The Economic Cooperation and Development Commission for Africa approved three Regional Integration Action Agencies and a Preferred Trade Area (PTA) for the Eastern and Southern Africa Market (COMESA) predecessor (Hartzenberg, 2011).

The need for good relationships between different countries is increasingly becoming important, especially in the current dispensation where interconnectivity is fast gaining momentum for the sake of market expansion (World Trade Organization, 2019). The East African Community (EAC) is greatly motivated by active regional integration, large market size and access, as well as trade policies that aim to cement regional trade integration. However, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the only region in the world that has not been successful in using trade as a powerful tool to generate rapid and long-term economic development and progress. The sub-region's contribution to global commerce has been protected, averaging only 2% between 2010 and 2019 (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2021).

The classification of non-tariff trade barriers that impede bilateral trade within Sub-Saharan Africa will inform the discussion of how to launch the AfCFTA successfully. However, estimates of the contribution of trade policies and behind-the-border trade measures to trade costs in Sub-Saharan Africa can be obtained by estimating an intra-Africa trade cost function. In fact, data and measurement issues with the majority of non-tariff trade barriers within Sub-Saharan Africa have contributed to the failure of earlier measures to lower non-tariff barriers in order to increase intra-regional trade in Africa (Turkson et al., 2023). The seven member states that comprise the East African Community, a regional intergovernmental organization with its headquarters located in Arusha, Tanzania, are the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The East African Community aims to enhance economic, political, social, and cultural integration to elevate the living standards of its people by means of enhanced competitiveness, value-added production, trade, and investments (EAC, 2022). The persistence of non-tariff barriers within the East African Community continues to pose significant challenges to the organization's goals of economic integration. These barriers impede intra-regional trade, disproportionately affect local and regional businesses, and necessitate policy interventions for their reduction and eventual elimination. Understanding and mitigating these barriers are crucial steps towards achieving the EAC's vision of a fully integrated East African market. In order to lower non-tariff barriers (NTBs) and promote increased trade, these measures primarily aim to streamline the border clearance procedure (Bergquist et al., 2021). The East African Community (EAC) committed to supporting efforts and strategies aimed at removing barriers to trade. Turkson et al. (2023) conducted a study that revealed low-quality infrastructure and insufficient trade facilitation measures as the primary causes of Africa's relatively low trade flows.

In recent times, the advantages that regional economic integration brings to its member countries have garnered significant attention on a global scale. The relative success of the European Union's (EU) monetary and currency union has greatly assisted the acceleration of other regional integration initiatives in the developing world. Muthoni (2016) asserts that most economies are striving to join the increased interdependence resulting from integration initiatives, driven by the significant potential trade benefits. Non-tariff barriers may have the unintended consequence of consolidating market power at the border, as they may be especially costly for small traders (Bergquist et al., 2021). This may impact the degree of competition in each nation's home marketplace.

The member countries in the EAC have progressed in removing non-tariff barriers, and the EAC Secretariat has pledged to do away with and minimize non-tariff barriers with the backing of ministers and heads of state. All of the members understand that the removal of non-tariff barriers is necessary to achieve the EAC's goal of creating an integrated market.

Rwanda will negotiate with other members of the East African Community (EAC) to remove current non-tariff barriers, especially those related to policies and procedures, such as the complicated customs administration processes at the intra-EAC border crossing points, which include various taxes and levies. Other barriers include severe licensing procedures and weighbridges. The implementation of new non-tariff barriers compensates for the elimination of tariffs under the CU. According to Bowen (2018), Rwanda would establish its own national monitoring committees for non-tariff barriers, following the model of the EAC Secretariat and Business Council, and take part in the suggested system for monitoring non-tariff barriers.

Rwanda has seen an increase in trade volume since joining the EAC in 2009. However, non-tariff barriers could hinder its integration into the East African Community. Poor regulatory frameworks for the common market could remain challenging to achieve in the short term, thereby denying the EAC countries the opportunity to collectively move forward with international trade in the region. Having ratified the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA), which began in 2021, and which Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Uganda also pledged to be part of, it was expected that Rwanda would reduce its international trade tariffs (Mold, 2020). However, the agreement among the partner countries to eliminate tariffs on intra-regional imports over a period of 10 years has not fully been realized. As a result, both tariff and non-tariff policies for international trade affect trading partners in terms of ready access to goods and services, as well as service delivery to citizens.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the East African Community's (EAC) continuous efforts to foster regional integration by removing tariff barriers, non-tariff barriers (NTBs) remain a significant challenge to the free movement of goods and services across member states. These NTBs, which include complex regulatory requirements, inefficient customs procedures, and infrastructural constraints, hinder trade, investments, and overall economic cooperation within the EAC. Consequently, these barriers obstruct the EAC's goal of achieving deeper economic, political, and social integration, which is essential for boosting the region's competitiveness, realizing economies of scale, and enhancing food security through increased intra-African trade (Mwanza, 2013).

Although several studies have examined the impact of NTBs on regional integration within the EAC (Njoroge, 2015; Eberhard-Ruiz & Moradi, 2013), a critical gap exists in the literature. Much of the current research lacks a detailed focus on country-specific and sector-specific analyses, particularly concerning landlocked countries like Rwanda and industries such as logistics and warehousing. Without this granular focus, the unique challenges faced by smaller economies and their businesses remain unaddressed, limiting the scope for targeted interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of NTBs.

In particular, the effect of NTBs on Rwanda's logistics sector, specifically regarding Magasins Généraux du Rwanda (MAGERWA), a leading player in the country's trade logistics, remains underexplored. As a central actor in facilitating Rwanda's import and export activities, MAGERWA's experiences with NTBs provide an opportunity to examine the barriers faced by local and regional businesses. This under-researched area limits the broader understanding of how NTBs affect business operations and, by extension, the entire trade system within the EAC.

Moreover, much of the existing research overlooks the dynamic nature of NTBs and their influence over time. Understanding how these barriers evolve and change is critical to assessing the effectiveness of EAC integration policies and initiatives aimed at reducing NTBs. By conducting a longitudinal analysis, this study seeks to capture trends and shifts in NTB implementation and their impact on EAC integration.

This research addresses these gaps by examining the specific challenges posed by NTBs in Rwanda, with a particular focus on the logistics sector and MAGERWA. It also aims to track changes in NTB reduction efforts over time and provide insights that will inform ongoing efforts to strengthen EAC integration. Additionally, this study seeks to offer policy recommendations to the Rwandan Ministry of Trade and Industry to simplify the NTB reporting process and raise awareness about the detrimental effects of NTBs on the movement of goods, people, and labor, particularly in developing economies. Through these contributions, the study will offer valuable insights into how NTBs can be mitigated to enhance regional trade and cooperation within the EAC.

1.2 Research Objectives

It was guided by the following specific objectives:

i. To evaluate the effects of technical barriers to trade on promotion of East African integration.
ii. To analyze the impact of import quotas on promotion of East African Community integration.
iii. To identify the effects of foreign exchange restrictions on promotion of East Africa Community integration.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical framework for this research on the effects of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) on the promotion of East African Community (EAC) integration draws on several key theories from international relations and economic integration. This framework provides a comprehensive understanding of how these theories explain the dynamics of regional integration in the EAC context.

Liberal Intergovernmentalism, developed by Andrew Moravcsik and Stanley Hoffmann in the 1990s, offers a foundational perspective for this study. Originally applied to European integration, this theory combines classical liberalism with intergovernmental negotiation theories to explain how national preferences are formed and how state cooperation and integration occur. Moravcsik's approach characterizes integration as the result of grand bargains shaped by three elements: national preference creation, inter-state bargaining, and institutional choices (Hodson & Puetter, 2019). A central question within this theory is whether regional integration is driven more by economic or geopolitical interests. The framework suggests that, as in European integration, economic interests may be more influential than political considerations in the EAC integration process. By focusing on how institutional factors impact the effectiveness of policies related to technical barriers, import quotas, and foreign exchange restrictions, this theory offers valuable insights into how national interests shape regional integration efforts in East Africa.

Economic Integration Theories further enrich the framework by exploring the rationale behind reducing trade barriers and fostering closer economic ties among countries. Classical Trade Theory, grounded in the works of economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, emphasizes the benefits of free trade and specialization based on comparative advantage. According to this theory, countries should focus on producing goods and services where they have a comparative advantage and engage in free trade to maximize overall welfare (Bowden, 2020). This perspective underscores the importance of trade in promoting economic integration, which is relevant to the EAC's objectives.

Customs Union Theory complements Classical Trade Theory by focusing on the formation of customs unions, which involve the removal of trade barriers among member countries and the establishment of a common external trade policy. This theory suggests that customs unions create larger, more integrated markets, leading to economies of scale, increased competition, and trade creation. In the East African context, regional economic communities such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) play instrumental roles in facilitating economic integration by promoting free trade and cooperation among member states (Garba & Wancelous, 2023).

The Heckscher-Ohlin Theory adds another layer by proposing that countries use their abundant domestic resources to produce goods for export, thereby fostering economic integration. This theory aligns with the concept of a common market, emphasizing the unrestricted movement of production factors such as labor, capital, and land. It argues that NTBs can hinder the efficient use of free trade and limit the exploitation of abundant production factors (Dominick, 2013). This perspective is particularly useful for understanding how NTBs affect the potential for increased economic integration between countries like Kenya and Ethiopia.

Finally, Regional Integration Theory provides a broader context by examining the processes and effects of economic integration within specific regions. It considers the political, social, and institutional factors that influence regional integration, as well as the potential benefits and challenges for member countries (Schimmelfennig, 2018). In East Africa, the EAC is a significant regional economic community comprising Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania. The theory highlights the EAC's achievements, such as the establishment of the Common Market and the commitment to creating a monetary union, while also noting the need for a comprehensive strategy to address ongoing and future challenges. This perspective emphasizes the importance of leveraging past successes and adopting effective strategies for deeper regional integration (Frederick et al., 2015).

Together, these theories offer a robust framework for analyzing the impact of non-tariff barriers on the promotion of EAC integration. They provide valuable insights into how regional integration processes are shaped and influenced by various economic, political, and institutional factors

2.2 Empirical Review

The researcher reviews previous studies done on non-tariff barriers based on the specific objectives of the recent research. This includes technical barriers, import quotas, foreign exchange restrictions, and administrative procedures at border posts. Non-tariff barriers, on the other hand, have spread through the interactions of countries and regional blocs around the globe. Since the wave of elimination of tariffs and other barriers to trade, governments have shifted to other measures to protect their economies and enhance their economic position vis-à-vis other countries. Dealing with these new trade barriers and regional convergence is now a dilemma for regional blocs. Their experiences vary, with some blocs having made significant progress whereas others are still at the initial levels.

2.2.1 Effects of Technical Barriers to Trade on Regional Integration

International trade occurs when goods and services move across national borders. According to the Heckscher-Ohlin theory, nations with abundant production factors stand to benefit from engaging in trade with other countries. Both intra- and inter-country trade relationships contribute to the welfare of individuals and foster economic growth. As a result, trade within specific economic blocs provides opportunities for young people to engage in a variety of activities, facilitating increased investment flows and market access for good (Smith & Brown, 2020).

According to Sakyi and Opoku (2014), a comprehensive transatlantic trade and investment agreement has the potential to generate significant economic benefits for both the European Union (€119 billion annually) and the United States (€95 billion annually).Top of Form On average, a family of four in the EU would enjoy an additional €545 annually in disposable income, while in the US, the figure stands at €655 per family. The mutual benefits accrued by the EU and US would not be detrimental to other global regions; instead, trade liberalisation between these entities would foster positive impacts on global trade and incomes, potentially increasing worldwide income by nearly €100 billion.

Enhanced trade would lead to a 28% surge in EU exports to the US, equivalent to an extra €187 billion in exports of EU goods and services. Overall, EU exports would rise by 6%, while US exports would rise by 8%. The reduction of non-tariff barriers is pivotal in transatlantic liberalisation efforts, with up to 80% of the potential gains stemming from cuts in bureaucratic costs and regulations, alongside the liberalisation of services and public procurement.

2.2.2 Impact of Import Quotas on Regional Integration

Import licensing rules, which restrict or forbid imports, are one of the most common obstacles to commerce within the EAC region. The problem of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) between Kenya and Uganda at Malaba has remained throughout time. While Article 13 of the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union aims to eliminate all forms of NTBs among EAC partner states, this objective has not materialized in Malaba (EAC, 2021).

By carrying out the Business Index Climate Survey (BCI) in 2005, the East African Business Council (EABC, 2005) launched a major initiative to address the NTBs that were already present in East Africa. Trade-related non-tariff barriers (NTBs), like the one in Malaba, demonstrate the region's unfinished business with regard to the initiative's execution.

Various grounds, such as revenue protection, consumer protection, national security, environmental preservation, and the support of domestic industry, have justified NTBs. However, the situation in Malaba (Obi et al. 2018) illustrates that these justifications have not consistently achieved their intended objectives. One prevalent NTB in the East African Community (EAC) region involves import prohibitions or restrictions enforced through licensing requirements.

However, GATT Agreement Article XI requires members to refrain from imposing any prohibitions or limitations other than tariffs, taxes, or charges. This includes licenses, quotas, and other measures like standards, testing, labeling, and certification requirements. Based on data from UN Comtrade (2017), Ethiopia's exports to Kenya totaled $52,050,591.00 billion USD in 2017, while imports amounted to $38,009,228 USD for the same period. However, in 2018, Ethiopian exports declined significantly to $23,484,647 USD, while imports rose to $40,148,127 USD. On the other hand, Kenya exported goods worth $67,543,931 USD and imported goods worth $20,374,796 USD in the 2017 fiscal year (UN Comtrade, 2017).

Ethiopia imports most of its goods from developed nations outside of Africa, especially capital goods that are not easily accessible in African markets because there is not enough coordination to promote trade within Africa (UN Comtrade, 2018). Many nations highlight import quotas as a means to ensure that high-quality goods entering domestic markets meet certain standards, but many also use them as protectionist tactics. Consequently, they have impeded regional trade among East African Community (EAC) partner states. However, under specific circumstances, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements sanction such measures to protect domestic industries from the severe impacts of dumped or subsidized imports. When utilized as protectionist tools, they can serve as highly potent non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to trade. This practice is prevalent among EAC partner states and constitutes a significant NTB to trade. Additionally, service barriers within the EAC partner states represent another form of NTB to trade (Fred, 2018).

2.2.3 Effects of Foreign Exchange Restrictions on Regional Integration

Trade barriers among the member states of the East African Community (EAC) include export-import regulations and ineffective institutions, which significantly impact commercial relations throughout the region. Additionally, the EAC lacks efficient information-sharing mechanisms and harmonized trade laws that could enhance trade among its member countries. Ethiopia and Kenya, in particular, share a lengthy history in terms of politics, economy, and public relations (Trade Law Review, 2022).

However, several issues hinder trade between these two countries, leading to delicate trade exchanges. One major factor is the poor performance of trade facilitation, which has strained the relationship between Kenya and Ethiopia. Non-tariff trade barriers, such as lengthy bureaucratic processes, poorly implemented bilateral trade agreements, and other associated obstacles, are largely responsible for this poor performance (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

Despite these challenges, research indicates that economic integration can support and balance the economic growth of the countries involved. Within the EAC, non-tariff barriers, such as demanding quality inspection protocols, high transit fees, and arbitrary rules of origin, are common (COMESA, 2021). In response to these barriers, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has introduced new regulations that empower its Secretariat to impose sanctions on member countries that maintain trade restrictions and other non-tariff obstacles within the trading bloc.

The EAC established the Customs Union and a Common External Tariff on January 1, 2005 (EAC, 2020). Furthermore, on July 1, 2010, the Common Market Protocol came into force, aiming to allow the free flow of goods and human resources among the East African states (EAC, 2012). The Customs Union and Common External Tariff were designed to create a free trade region with uniform external tariffs while allowing member nations to apply various import quotas. Rwanda and Burundi became members of the EAC in July 2007.

Article 9 of the EAC Treaty states that the institutional framework of the community consists of three main arms: the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. As a regional body with an economic integration agenda, the EAC plays a pivotal role. This study aims to uncover the challenges faced by the bloc in addressing non-tariff barriers, the measures implemented to tackle these barriers, the non-tariff barriers that persist, and their overall effects on the region's economic integration.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed a descriptive research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect involved collecting data through documentary checklists, while semi-structured questions were used to enhance the response rate. The qualitative data focused on discussions about non-tariff barriers and the promotion of East African Community (EAC) integration, particularly concerning MAGERWA. This qualitative data was presented in the form of opinions to complement the statistical findings.

The descriptive research design necessitates the collection of quantitative data, which is organized numerically and systematically. This approach helps in depicting occurrences and understanding the relationships between dependent and independent variables. Consequently, the study used this design to explore and clarify the interactions and effects of non-tariff barriers on EAC integration.

3.2 Target Population

The research targeted 2045 persons, including 15 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international cooperation, 15 workers from the Ministry of Trade, 15 officers from MAGERWA, 700 transporters within the EAC, 300 clearing agents operating in Rwanda, as well as 1000 traders in Rwanda engaged in cross-border trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MINAFET), Ministry of Trade (MoT), Magasins Généraux du Rwanda (MAGERWA), and Clearing Agents Operating in Rwanda (CAO).

3.3 Sample Design

3.3.1 Sample Size Determination

To make this research more accurate, a confidence interval of 95% was used. This means that if 95 research participants out of 100 contribute to answering research questions, the research is accurate. Therefore, we calculated the sample size using a sampling error of 5%. Yamane (1967) developed the following formula to determine the sample size:

$$\mathbf{n} = \frac{\mathrm{N}}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where **n:** sample size of project undertaken
N: Targeted Population
(e): Sampling error =5%

$$\mathbf{n} = \frac{2045}{1+2045(5\%)^2}$$
$$= \frac{2045}{1+2045(0.05)^2}$$
$$= \frac{2045}{1+2045(0.0025)}$$
$$= \frac{2045}{6.1125}$$

n =334.5603 ≈ **335**

Therefore, the sample size of the study was **335** people.

Table 1
Sampling Techniques

Category of the Target Population	Population Size	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international cooperation officials	15	3	Purposive
Ministry of Trade Officers	15	3	Purposive
MAGERWA Officers	15	3	Purposive
Transporters within the EAC	700	115	Simple Random
Clearing agents operating in Rwanda	300	49	Simple Random
Traders in Rwanda engaged in cross-border trade	1000	162	Simple Random
Total	**2045**	**335**	

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Techniques

The sampling technique was used to select the number of respondents that were used in the study as a representative group. Therefore, we chose a representative sample for this study from the entire targeted population through simple random selection. The study employed non-probabilistic sampling instead of random data selection. Purposive sampling was instead used to get data from key sources and respondents. Systematic sampling methods along with strata stratification were employed, with each department forming a distinct stratum. The objective of the study is to gather insights from staff across various ministries and public institutions, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Procedure

The researcher collected data using questionnaires, interviews, and a desk review. The desk evaluation was divided into four parts, aligned with the study's objectives. A research assistant was engaged to assist in distributing the research instruments, conducting interviews, analyzing documents, and collecting the data.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

After a specified period, the data was analyzed. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively, while qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis methods.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The researcher highly valued the analyzed demographic characteristics of the participants, as this information served as a baseline statistic for the research findings. The demographic characteristics were gender, age, educational level, and occupation. The tables presented the results.

4.1.1 Gender of Respondents

When conducting research, it is important to collect information about the gender identities of study participants. This includes information about whether they identify as male, female, or another gender identity. This information can help guide the development of policies, interventions, and further research by allowing researchers to analyze and interpret their findings through the lens of gender diversity.

Table 2

Gender of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	209	62.4
Female	126	37.6
Total	**335**	**100.0**

The gender distribution of respondents is presented in Table 2. The researcher examined the gender distribution of the participants, revealing that 62.4% of the 335 respondents were men, while 37.6% were women. The findings show that both genders were well represented in the study.

4.2 Analysis of Data from Questionnaires

The purpose of this section is to show the findings from the data analysis. The study used MAGERWA as an example to assess the impact of non-tariff barriers on the promotion of EAC integration. The analysis was founded on the specific objectives of the research, which included evaluating the effects of foreign exchange restrictions on the development of East Africa Community integration, analyzing the impact of import quotas on promotion, and identifying the effects of technical trade obstacles on promotion. The results were categorized according to the objectives.

4.2.1 Effects of Technical Barriers to Trade on Promotion of East African Integration

The first objective evaluated the effects of technical barriers to trade on promotion of East African integration. The results are presented and interpreted as follow:

Table 3

Effects of Technical Barriers to Trade on Promotion of East African Integration

Statement	Not at All		Small Extent		Moderate		Large Extent		Very Large Extent		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Mean	SD
The Removal of Technical Barriers to Trade	121	36.1	83	24.8	101	30.1	30	9.0	0	0	2.12	1.005
Rules for product weight have been reduced in the EAC to facilitate trade	91	27.2	112	33.4	57	17.0	55	16.4	20	6.0	2.41	1.215
Rules on size have been alleviated in the EAC to facilitate trade	130	38.8	82	24.5	123	36.7	0	0	0	0	1.98	.870
The rules and regulations related to packaging was reduced in the EAC to facilitate trade	121	36.1	101	30.1	90	26.9	23	6.9	0	0	2.04	.951
Mandatory labeling	112	33.4	73	21.8	104	31.0	30	9.0	16	4.8	2.30	1.161
There was the harmonization of ingredient or identity standards in order to promote trade in EAC	134	40.0	125	37.3	76	22.7	0	0	0	0	1.83	.774
Shelf-life restrictions	121	36.1	65	19.4	129	38.5	20	6.0	0	0	2.14	.984
Overall Mean											**2.117**	

N=335

Table 3 presents the results related to the study's first objective, which is to evaluate the effects of technical barriers to trade on the promotion of East African Community (EAC) integration. The data, collected from 335 respondents, sheds light on various aspects of how these barriers impact regional integration.

Regarding trade technical barriers, 36.1% of respondents said none had been removed. In contrast, 24.8% perceived a small extent of removal, 30.1% experienced a moderate extent, 9.0% noted a large extent, and none reported a very large extent. When asked about the reduction of rules for product weight to facilitate trade within the EAC, 27.2% of respondents felt there had been no reduction, 33.4% saw a small extent of reduction, 17.0% observed a moderate extent, 16.4% reported a large extent, and 6.0% indicated a very large extent. On the alleviation of rules regarding product size, 38.8% felt that no alleviation had occurred, 24.5% noted a small extent, and 36.7% experienced a moderate extent.

Regarding packaging rules and regulations, 36.1% of respondents reported that there had been no reduction, 30.1% saw a small extent of reduction, 26.9% observed a moderate extent, and 6.9% noted a large extent. In terms of mandatory labeling, 33.4% of respondents saw no change, 21.8% noted a small extent, 31.0% observed a moderate extent, 9.0% reported a large extent, and 4.8% indicated a very large extent. When considering the harmonization of ingredient or identity standards to promote trade within the EAC, 40.0% of respondents felt that no harmonization had occurred, 37.3% saw a small extent, and 22.7% experienced a moderate extent.

For shelf-life restrictions, 36.1% of respondents indicated that there had been no changes; 19.4% saw a small extent; 38.5% experienced a moderate extent; and 6.0% reported a large extent. The overall mean score of 2.117, which falls between "small extent" (2) and "moderate extent" (3), suggests that the effects of technical barriers to trade on EAC integration at MAGERWA are perceived to be small.

Respondents also identified several technical challenges that hinder the EAC's integration efforts. These challenges include varying procedures and documentation requirements for customs, which can obstruct the free movement of goods. Additionally, inadequate enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPRs) among EAC member nations may discourage investment and innovation. The lack of institutional capacity and expertise in trade-related issues at both national and regional levels also hampers the successful implementation of trade agreements and initiatives.

4.2.2 Impact of Import Quotas on Trade Promotion of East African Community Integration

The second objective was to analyze the impact of import quotas on promotion of East African Community integration. The results were presented and interpreted in Tables that follow.

Table 4

Impact of Import Quotas on Trade Promotion of East African Community Integration

Statement	Not at All		Small Extent		Moderate		Large Extent		Very Large Extent			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Mean	SD
Import quotas are a way to protect domestic producers from foreign competition	121	36.1	68	20.3	83	24.8	43	12.8	20	6.0	2.32	1.249
Import quotas are a form of protectionism that governments use to support and protect their domestic industries	110	32.8	1	.3	141	42.1	55	16.4	28	8.4	2.67	1.309
Limits the quantity or the total values of a good imported	105	31.3	99	29.6	101	30.1	30	9.0	0	0	2.17	.974
Keeps domestic prices high by limiting foreign supplies in the market	182	54.3	87	26.0	66	19.7	0	0	0	0	1.65	.789
The main objective of an import quota is to protect domestic industries from cheaper foreign goods	91	27.2	51	15.2	81	24.2	75	22.4	37	11.0	2.75	1.359
Import quotas can serve to stabilize domestic prices by reducing foreign imports	73	21.8	120	35.8	93	27.8	34	10.1	15	4.5	2.40	1.073
Import quotas can be set to encourage the use of scarce foreign exchange resources on more necessary items rather than "waste" them on unnecessary or luxury goods	50	14.9	80	23.9	88	26.3	70	20.9	47	14.0	2.95	1.268
Governments can use import quotas as a form of retaliation against foreign governments as a response to trade or other policies	0	0	50	14.9	205	61.2	37	11.0	43	12.8	3.22	.853
Supply and demand	0	0	106	31.6	187	55.8	42	12.5	0	0	2.81	.638
Hidden Quotas	187	55.8	95	28.4	53	15.8	0	0	0	0	1.60	7.47
Overall Mean											**2.454**	

N=335

Table 4 presents the findings related to the first objective of this study, which is to analyze the impact of import quotas on the promotion of East African Community (EAC) integration. The data, derived from 335 respondents, provides insights into various aspects of how import quotas affect regional integration.

Regarding the perception of import quotas as a means to protect domestic producers from foreign competition, 36.1% of respondents felt that import quotas did not serve this purpose at all. In contrast, 20.3% believed they had a small effect, 24.8% observed a moderate effect, 12.8% saw a large effect, and 6.0% felt they had a very large effect. When considering whether import quotas represent a form of protectionism used by governments to support and protect domestic industries, 32.8% of respondents indicated that this was not the case at all, while 20.3% saw a small extent, 42.1% observed a moderate extent, 16.4% reported a large extent, and 8.4% identified a very large extent.

On the issue of limits on the quantity or total value of goods imported, 38.1% of respondents felt that import quotas did not affect this at all, 29.6% saw a small extent, 30.1% observed a moderate extent, and 9.0% noted a large extent. Regarding the effect of import quotas on keeping domestic prices high by limiting foreign supplies, 54.3% of respondents felt that import quotas did not contribute to this at all, 26.0% saw a small extent, and 19.7% observed a moderate extent.

Concerning whether the main objective of import quotas is to protect domestic industries from cheaper foreign goods, 27.2% of respondents felt that this was not the case at all, 15.2% observed a small extent, 24.2% reported a moderate extent, 22.4% saw a large extent, and 11.0% perceived a very large extent.

When analyzing the impact of import quotas on stabilizing domestic prices by reducing imports, 21.8% of respondents felt this was not the case at all, 35.8% observed a small extent, 27.8% saw a moderate extent, 10.1% noted a large extent, and 4.5% reported a very large extent. In terms of whether import quotas are set to encourage the use of scarce foreign exchange resources on more necessary items rather than luxury goods, 14.9% felt that this was not the case at all, 23.9% observed a small extent, 26.3% saw a moderate extent, 20.9% reported a large extent, and 14.0% perceived a very large extent.

Regarding the use of import quotas by governments as a form of retaliation against foreign governments in response to trade or other policies, 14.9% observed a small extent, 61.2% noted a moderate extent, 11.0% reported a large extent, and 12.8% perceived a very large extent. Concerning the impact of supply and demand, 31.6% felt it had a small effect, 55.8% observed a moderate effect, and 12.5% noted a large effect. For hidden quotas, 55.8% of respondents felt there was no impact, 28.4% saw a small extent, and 15.8% observed a moderate extent.

The overall mean score of 2.454, which falls between "small extent" (2) and "moderate extent" (3), indicates a moderate impact of import quotas on the promotion of EAC integration at MAGERWA. Respondents also highlighted other import quota activities affecting EAC integration, including the free movement of goods, the right of establishment, and the improved movement of persons and labor. Commonly mentioned activities related to import quotas that could impact EAC integration include the harmonization of import quotas, transparency and information sharing, monitoring and enforcement, technical assistance, and stakeholder engagement to collaboratively address issues.

4.2.3 Effects of Foreign Exchange Restrictions on Promotion of East Africa Community Integration

The third objective was to identify the effects of foreign exchange restrictions on promotion of East Africa Community integration. The results were presented and interpreted as follow:

Table 5

Effects of Foreign Exchange Restrictions on Promotion of East Africa Community Integration

	Not at All		Small Extent		Moderate		Large Extent		Very Large Extent			
Statement	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**Mean**	**SD**
Setting exchange rates					58	17.3	208	62.1	69	20.6	4.03	.616
Banning or limiting purchases of foreign currency within the country	222	66.3	113	33.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.34	.474
Setting exchange rates					92	27.5	170	50.7	73	21.8	3.94	.701
Overall Mean											**3.103**	

N=335

Table 5 presents the findings related to the third objective of this study, which is to identify the effects of foreign exchange restrictions on the promotion of East African Community (EAC) integration. The analysis, based on data from 335 respondents, reveals several insights into how these restrictions impact regional integration.

When considering the impact of setting exchange rates, 17.3% of respondents felt that it had a moderate effect, 62.1% observed a large extent of impact, and 20.6% reported a very large extent. In terms of banning or limiting the purchase of foreign currency within the country, 66.3% of respondents indicated that this had no effect at all, while 33.7% observed a small extent of impact.

Regarding the overall effect of setting exchange rates, 27.5% of respondents felt it had a moderate level of impact, 50.7% observed a large extent, and 21.8% reported a very large extent. The overall mean score of 3.103, which falls between "moderate extent" (3) and "large extent" (4), suggests that foreign exchange restrictions have a significant moderate effect on the promotion of EAC integration at MAGERWA.

4.2.4 Promotion of East African Community Integration

Researcher analyzed the dependent variables of promotion of East African Community integration. The results were presented and interpreted as follow:

Table 6

Promotion of East African Community Integration

	Not at All		Small Extent		Moderate		Large Extent		Very Large Extent			
Statement	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**Mean**	**SD**
Free movement of Goods	203	60.6	100	29.9	32	9.6	0	0	0	0	1.49	.665
Right of establishment	0	0	0	0	223	66.6	112	33.4	0	0	3.33	.472
Improved movement of persons	121	36.1	83	24.8	101	30.1	30	9.0	0	0	2.12	1.005
Improved movement of labors	200	59.7	87	26.0	48	14.3	0	0	0	0	1.55	.732
Overall Mean											**2.1225**	

N=335

Table 6 presents the findings related to the dependent variables of the promotion of East African Community (EAC) integration. The data, collected from 335 respondents, highlights various aspects of integration within the context of Magasins Généraux du Rwanda (MAGERWA).

Regarding the free movement of goods, 60.6% of respondents felt that this was not promoted at all, 29.9% saw a small extent of promotion, and 9.6% observed a moderate level of promotion. For the right of establishment, 66.6% of respondents noted a moderate level of promotion, while 33.4% observed a large extent.

In terms of the free movement of persons, 36.1% felt that there was no promotion at all, 24.8% saw a small extent, 30.1% observed a moderate level, and 9.0% noted a large extent. When it comes to the free movement of labor, 59.7% of respondents felt that this was not promoted at all, 26.0% observed a small extent, and 14.3% saw a moderate level of promotion.

The overall mean score of 2.1225, which lies between "small extent" (2) and "moderate extent" (3), indicates a significant small extent of promotion of EAC integration at MAGERWA. This suggests that while there are some efforts towards integration, they are perceived as limited in their effectiveness.

4.2.5 Relationship between Non-tariff Barriers and Promotion of EAC Integration

This study analyzed the relationship between independent and dependent variables (effects of non-tariff barriers and promotion of EAC integration). The results were presented in table as follow:

Table 7

Relationship between Non-tariff Barriers and Promotion of EAC Integration

		Effects of technical barriers	**Impact of import quotas**	**Effects of foreign exchange restrictions**	**Promotion of East Africa Community integration**
Effects of technical barriers	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	335			
Impact of import quotas	Pearson Correlation	.973**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	335	335		
Effects of foreign exchange restrictions	Pearson Correlation	.955**	.966**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	335	335	335	
Promotion of East Africa Community integration	Pearson Correlation	.953**	.954**	.966**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	**335**	**335**	**335**	**335**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows the relationship between non-tariff barriers and EAC integration promotion. The study focused on the effects of non-tariff barriers, specifically examining the effects of technical barriers, the impact of import quotas, and the effects of foreign exchange restrictions. The researchers determined the Pearson coefficients (r) using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26.0. The Pearson coefficients exhibit a relationship between -1 and 1, with a negative relationship from -1 to 0 and a positive relationship from 0 to 1. The Pearson coefficients indicate a high negative relationship from -1 to -0.5, a low negative relationship from -0.5 to 0, a low positive relationship from 0 to 0.5, and a high positive relationship from 0.5 to 1. The data analysis results revealed a relationship of r=0.953, r=0.954, and r=0.966 between the effects of technical barriers, the impact of import quotas, and the promotion of EAC integration, respectively. The results demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between non-tariff barriers and the promotion of EAC integration at MAGERWA.

Table 8

Coefficients[a] of Non-tariff Barriers and Promotion of EAC Integration

Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**	**95.0% Confidence Interval for B**	
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**
1	(Constant)	.130	.040		3.291	.001	.052	.208
	Effects of technical barriers	.298	.062	.281	4.819	.000	.176	.420
	Impact of import quotas	.117	.072	.107	1.613	.108	-.026	.259
	Effects of foreign exchange restrictions	.602	.053	.594	11.430	.000	.499	.706

a. Dependent Variable: Promotion of East Africa Community integration

Table 8 displays the constant coefficients of independent and dependent variables for non-tariff barriers and EAC integration promotion. The overall constant results (P value =.001) showed that there was a significant relationship between non-tariff barriers and promotion of EAC integration at Magasins Généraux du Rwanda

(MAGERWA). In detail, the relationship was statistically significant as the P-value was less than 0.05. The results showed that the effects of technical barriers were statistically significant with a P-value of.000; the impact of import quotas was not statistically significant with a P-value of.108; and the effects of foreign exchange restrictions were statistically significant with a P-value of.000. The researcher considered 95% to be a confidence interval.

4.3 Findings from Interview

The interview guide was administered to three Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation officials, three Ministry of Trade officers, and three MAGERWA officers. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The data was examined and debated in detail, and both the text and interview tapes were converted into content.

When asked why the country signed agreements related to technical barriers to trade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation officials responded that the agreements were intended to promote trade. They aim to facilitate international trade by harmonizing technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures. The agreements were signed to ensure product quality and safety, guaranteeing that products meet certain quality and safety standards. Additionally, they help prevent discrimination by establishing transparent and non-discriminatory procedures for setting standards, thereby preventing countries from using technical regulations to discriminate against foreign products.

The Ministry of Trade officers discussed several obstacles that can prevent these agreements from stimulating the promotion of the East African Community (EAC). They identified increased costs as one major obstacle, noting that complying with technical standards and regulations imposed by trading partners can raise production and trade costs for Rwandan businesses, making Rwandan goods less competitive in the region. Limited market access was another challenge, as technical barriers may restrict access to key markets within the EAC and beyond. If Rwandan goods do not meet the required standards or regulations of other EAC member states, they may face barriers to entry or outright bans, reducing market opportunities for Rwandan exporters.

The officers also mentioned that technical barriers hinder the smooth flow of goods within the EAC, undermining efforts toward deeper economic integration. Inefficient customs procedures, differing technical regulations, and varying product standards among member states can disrupt supply chains and reduce the benefits of regional trade agreements. Additionally, complying with technical standards and regulations may pose challenges for Rwandan industries, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises with limited resources and technical capacities. This can impede the growth and competitiveness of domestic industries, slowing down industrial development within Rwanda and the broader EAC region.

To address these technical barriers, the officers suggested that both the Rwandan government and EAC partners need to work together to harmonize technical regulations, enhance regulatory capacity, promote mutual recognition agreements, and invest in infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives. They also highlighted several obstacles that can prevent these agreements from effectively promoting the EAC. These include implementation challenges, where differences in legal systems, administrative capacities, and enforcement mechanisms across member states can make effective implementation difficult. The lack of political will is another issue, as agreements might remain on paper without meaningful action if there is no strong political commitment from all member states. Economic disparities among member states can also create tensions and hinder cooperation. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure, including transportation networks, energy systems, and digital connectivity, can limit the movement of goods and people. Political instability, conflicts, and security threats within the region can also disrupt trade and investment. Addressing these obstacles requires concerted efforts from member states, regional institutions, and external partners to foster trust, enhance cooperation, and create an enabling environment for sustainable development and integration within the East African Community.

The MAGERWA officers discussed the effects of import quotas on the promotion of the EAC. They noted that import quotas could have both positive and negative effects depending on various factors such as the specific industries affected, the implementation mechanism, and the overall economic context. Positive effects include the promotion of regional industries, as import quotas can encourage the development and growth of industries within the EAC region by limiting competition from foreign imports. Import quotas can also help balance trade within the EAC by limiting the influx of cheaper imports from non-member countries, potentially reducing trade deficits and strengthening the economic stability of member states. However, import quotas can sometimes lead to market distortions, particularly if not implemented efficiently. They may also result in higher prices for imported goods within the EAC, as limited supply can drive up demand and prices, which can negatively affect consumers, especially those with lower incomes. Enforcing import quotas effectively can also be challenging and may require significant administrative resources. If member states do not have the capacity to monitor and enforce quotas adequately, they may be ineffective or prone to abuse.

4.3 Discussions

According to Byiers and De Melo (2018), the East African Community (EAC) plans to gradually establish itself as a customs union, common market, monetary union, and eventually an East African political federation. This study evaluated the effects of technical barriers to trade on the promotion of East African integration. Out of 335 respondents, 36.1% responded "not at all" to the removal of technical barriers to trade, while 30.1% responded at a moderate level. Regarding the reduction of rules for product weight in the EAC to facilitate trade, 27.2% responded "not at all," and 33.4% responded to a small extent. International trade occurs when goods and services move across national borders.

According to Sakyi and Opoku (2014), a comprehensive transatlantic trade and investment agreement has the potential to generate significant economic benefits for both sides. On the harmonization of ingredient or identity standards to promote trade in the EAC, 40.0% responded "not at all," and 37.3% responded to a small extent. The overall mean of the effects of technical barriers to trade on the promotion of East African integration was 2.117, which falls between "small extent" (2) and "moderate" (3), indicating that the effects of technical barriers to trade on the promotion of East African Community integration were of a small extent.

According to Bergquist et al. (2021), non-tariff barriers may have the unintended consequence of consolidating market power at the border since they may be especially costly for small traders. The study analyzed the impact of import quotas on the promotion of East African Community integration. Out of 335 respondents, 36.1% responded "not at all" to the statement that import quotas are a way to protect domestic producers from foreign competition, and 24.8% responded at a moderate level. Regarding import quotas as a form of protectionism used by governments to support and protect domestic industries, 32.8% responded "not at all," and 42.1% responded on the moderate side. The problem of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) between Kenya and Uganda at Malaba has persisted over time. While Article 13 of the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union aims to eliminate all forms of NTBs among EAC partner states, this objective has not materialized in the case of Malaba (Mwangi, 2020).

The current study analyzed the limits of quantity or total values of goods imported, with 38.1% responding "not at all," 29.6% responding to a small extent, and 30.1% responding at a moderate level. Regarding keeping domestic prices high by limiting foreign supplies in the market, 54.3% responded "not at all."

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa has created new regulations in response to these non-tariff barriers, allowing its Secretariat to impose sanctions on member nations that impose trade restrictions and other non-tariff obstacles within the trading bloc (COMESA Secretariat, 2023). The study analyzed whether the main objective of an import quota was to protect domestic industries from cheaper foreign goods, with 27.2% responding "not at all," 24.2% responding at a moderate level, and 22.4% responding to a large extent.

Regarding whether governments can use import quotas as a form of retaliation against foreign governments in response to trade or other policies, 61.2% responded at a moderate level. On supply and demand, 55.8% responded at a moderate level. It is expected that removing trade barriers such as non-tariff barriers within the EAC region will improve trade and political relations by increasing regional investment, increasing the amount of goods and services exchanged, and accelerating economic growth. This is true because, according to the idea of comparative advantage, every nation has something to create and offer to others (Hausmann et al., 2022).

This study found that the relationship between the effects of technical barriers, the impact of import quotas, and the effects of foreign exchange restrictions on the promotion of EAC integration was r=0.953, r=0.954, and r=0.966, respectively, showing a statistically significant relationship between non-tariff barriers and the promotion of EAC integration. According to Byiers and De Melo (2018), the East African Community (EAC) plans to gradually establish itself as a customs union, common market, monetary union, and eventually an East African political federation. Empirical evidence shows that commerce has improved and market accessibility has expanded in East Africa because of the economic integration brought about by the region's single market and customs union.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The goal of African integration was to create a single economy within the African Economic Community (AEC) in response to the regional difficulties the continent faced due to its small number of national markets and landlocked nations (EAC, 2012). According to Byiers and De Melo (2018), the East African Community (EAC) plans to gradually establish itself as a customs union, common market, monetary union, and eventually an East African political federation. The study assessed the effects of non-tariff barriers on the promotion of EAC integration with the case of Magasins Généraux du Rwanda (MAGERWA). The conclusions, based on the results from data analysis on the effects of technical barriers to trade on the promotion of East African integration, showed an overall mean of 2.117, which fell between small extents (2) and moderate extents (3), concluding that the effects of technical barriers to trade on the promotion of East African Community integration were to a small extent. The results indicated that the relationship between the effects of technical barriers and the promotion of EAC integration was r=0.953, p<0.05, which concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between non-tariff technical barriers and the promotion of EAC integration.

Regarding the impact of import quotas on the promotion of East African Community integration, the overall mean was 2.454, which fell between small extents (2) and moderate extents (3), concluding that there was a moderate impact of import quotas on the promotion of East African Community integration. The results indicated that the relationship between import quotas and the promotion of EAC integration was r=0.954, p<0.05, concluding that there was a statistically significant relationship between import quotas and the promotion of EAC integration. On the effects of foreign exchange restrictions on the promotion of East African Community integration, the overall mean was 3.103, which fell between moderate extents (3) and large extents (4), concluding that there were significant moderate effects of foreign exchange restrictions on the promotion of East African Community integration. The results indicated that the relationship between foreign exchange restrictions and the promotion of EAC integration was r=0.966, p<0.05, concluding that there was a statistically significant relationship between foreign exchange restrictions and the promotion of EAC integration at Magasins Généraux du Rwanda (MAGERWA).

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, researcher suggested the following recommendations:

The states members of EAC should put in action the planned goals of community for promoting the free trade in region. This will promote the economic development and a smooth regional integration of community members. Furthermore, the citizens of state members should use and profit the free trade of EAC to develop their business and contribute to the sustainable economic development of their states.

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