RESEARCH ARTICLE

INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION AND THE GROWTH OF INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE IN THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

Abdikadir O. Aden[*1], Timothy C. Okech[1]

1. Chandaria School of School, United States International University – Africa

Corresponding Author: abdikadir25@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Intellectual stimulation is the encouragement of followers to think differently and creatively (Kelly, 2018). Leaders who exhibit this, question the assumptions and beliefs of the organization and encourage followers to be innovative and creative, thus approaching old problems in new ways (Nguyen et al., 2017). In the process, the leader empowers followers by persuading them to propose new and controversial ideas without fear of punishment or ridicule (Seung Han et al., 2016). The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of intellectual stimulation of the Council of Ministers on the perceived growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the EAC. The study adopted positivism research philosophy and applied sequential explanatory mixed method approach targeting two hundred and five senior trade officers in the EAC Partner States and those based at the EAC headquarters. The adoption of this method was informed by the nature of the issue under investigation. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire that contained both open ended and closed ended questions. Data collected was coded, cleaned and analyzed using SPSS version 20 to obtain both descriptive and inferential statistics. Results show a positive and significant influence of intellectual stimulation on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC; R2=.409, $F(1,121) = 83.782$, $p<.05$; $\beta = .755$, $t(4.292)=10.351$, $p<.05$. The findings point to the fact that increased intellectual stimulation in terms of encouraging risk taking, creative innovation and communication by the council, has positive and significant influence on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. It is thus recommended that council members of the EAC should strategically demonstrate intellectual stimulation by encouraging officers within their dockens to be risk takers, while enhancing innovation and bolster appropriate communication.

Keywords: Intellectual Stimulation, Transformational Leadership, Intra Regional Trade

I. INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership inspires trust by empowering followers thereby enhancing performance, which contributes towards the attainment of organizational objectives (Rita et al., 2018). According to Abbasi (2017), transformational leaders are easily able to enhance their followers' potential by demonstrating intellectual stimulation behavior. Intellectual stimulation is the encouragement of followers to think differently and creatively (Kelly, 2018). Intellectually stimulating leaders question the assumptions and beliefs of the organization and encourage followers to be innovative and creative, thus approaching old problems in new ways (Nguyen et al., 2017). To grow trade and integration, Zahonogo (2017) opine that the traditional ways of doing things must be challenged and innovation encouraged.

In the context of Intra-Regional Trade, intellectual stimulation enables the council of ministers to arouse and challenge the senior officer's awareness of problems and their capacity to solve those problems (Kelly, 2018). They in the process, question assumptions and beliefs of integration and encourage the Trade officers to be innovative and creative, thus approaching old problems in new ways (Barbuto, 2015). Additionally, they empower Senior Trade Officers and other officers by persuading them to propose new and controversial ideas without fear of punishment or ridicule and they do not impose their own ideas judiciously and certainly on subordinates (Shafiu, Manaf & Muslim, 2019). This encourages the Trade officers' initiative and independence in handling issues. By inquiring into the perceived views of the senior trade officers in the partner states, this research will be able to establish the influence of intellectual stimulation of the Council Members on the growth of trade in the East African Community (EAC).

In this research intellectual stimulation of the Council members was analyzed in relation to the growth of Intra-Regional trade in the East African Community (EAC) as perceived by the Senior Trade Officers in the partner states. Berberoglu (2018) explains that while many organizations measure growth as a measure of performance by way of evaluating numerical information, in many cases growth is not necessary based on objective data. In Africa there is a far bigger volume of intra-regional trade than the actual reported data due to the informal and small scale nature of the cross border trade (Shola & Olanrewaju, 2020).

According to the World Trade Organization [WTO] (2018) growth of trade in economic integration plays an important role in enhancing shared prosperity in regional economic blocs. As a result of persistent efforts of transformational leaders, the European Unions' (EU) Intra-Regional Trade accounts for 69% of total exports and is expected to be sustainable and growing United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2018b). The other prominent regional integration body in the global arena is the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Intra-Regional Trade within the ASEAN region stands at 59% of exports with a strong forecast of growth in the coming years as a result of deepening integration process (UNCTAD, 2018b).

Intellectual stimulating leaders like Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Thomas Sankara and Jomo Kenyatta, are believed to be the early transformationists who championed for free trade in Africa (Elhiraika et al., 2016). Through the efforts of these leaders, economic corporations such as the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) were formed (Woldufessehatsion, 2016).

The EAC is a regional economic organization currently consisting of six member countries namely; Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of South Sudan (EAC, 2017b). The core objective of the community is to foster the growth of trade between the member countries and to improve the social wellbeing of its citizens (Treaty, 2000). The heads of states of the member countries form the Summit which is the superior most decision making organ of the community (Mshomba, 2017). However, under the Treaty, the Summit has delegated the policy making and implementation powers to the EAC Council of ministers which therefore effectively over sees the management of affairs in the community (EAC, 2017b).

The unique nature of the EAC as a regional economic integration model in Africa, has resulted in various studies analyzing success and challenges since its formation (Mshomba, 2017). Mshomba explains that most of these studies focused the performance of such areas like; trade, social-economic and political in the community. However, most of the existing studies on the EAC only examined the performance of Intra-Regional Trade in relation to non-leadership related factors affecting the community's trade performance (Elhiraika et al., 2016). This research is therefore aimed at bridging the knowledge and policy gap by answering the question: What is the relationship between intellectual stimulation behavior and the growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the EAC?

Hasan and Khajeh (2018) postulate that when senior managers are able to trust the range of options to consider in their decision-making, it promotes innovation, thus converting the intellectual stimulation provided by transformational leaders into advantageous outcomes. Transformational leadership behavior's linked to intellectual stimulation that this study adopted include; encouraging risk taking, creative innovation and communication. Cote (2017) holds that that intellectual stimulation of Senior Trade Officers in an organization, involves giving them the latitude to take risks in the course of their work, which enhances organization growth performance. Risk taking involves allowing the Senior Trade Officers or managers in an organization to take well calculated measures which though posing some level of uncertainty, are necessary as doing so will mean big for the growth of the organization (Mozammel & Haan, 2016)

Transformational leaders, using their intellectual stimulation ability, often grant a latitude to the Senior Trade Officers and managers to take measured risk that helps the organizations to move in the right direction thus winning the hearts of those officer or managers causing them to even working hard for the organizational growth (Kumar & Sharma, 2017). The intellectual stimulation dimension of transformational leadership also explains the degree in which the leaders stimulate their followers' endeavors to be innovative and creative, considering old organizational challenges with new perspectives (Nguyen et al., 2017).

According to Northouse (2018), some of the ways that leaders can stimulate the innovative and the creative abilities of their followers include questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. The transformational leader allows followers to make some mistakes so that their creativity and innovation is not stifled (Al-ali & Singh, 2017). Key behaviors applied by the transformational leader include re-examining critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate; seeking differing perspectives when solving problems; getting others to look at problems from many different angles; and suggesting new ways of completing tasks (Kumar, 2017).

Effective communication involves the exceptional ability for a leader to pass the desired message to their followers in the organization and also to receive feedback in the process (Shafiu *et al.*, 2019). Boamah et al. (2018) argues that, effective communication skill is one of the key attributes of transformational leaders that helps them in the achievement of the organizational objectives and that good communication is the bond that holds the organization together. As explained by Hasan and Khajeh (2018) in their study, effective communication skill is one of the critical success factors that a leader needs in achieving organizational objectives. Poor communication often leads to poor organizational performance due to lack of clarity and also because of lack feedback while of the other hand effective Communication provides avenues for encouraging recognition, appreciation and feedback which are a source of motivation thus leading to better performance (Kumar, 2017). This study hypothesized that if the Council members of the EAC are able to demonstrate these three behaviors of intellectual stimulation, namely; encouraging risk taking, creative innovation and communication, the result will be performance improvement by the Senior Trade Officers hence the growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the EAC.

A number of studies including Santos et al. (2018), Mshomba (2017) and Elhiraika et al. (2016) are in agreement that the process of regional integration is a transformational process from the 'national' to the 'regional'. Their research found that while a number of attempts have been made to explain the cause of the under performance of the EAC, the role of leadership in enhancing growth of intra-regional trade has not been studied adequately. Despite this fact, the number of studies on the influence of intellectual stimulation of leaders on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC remain limited. Abdelsalam (2015) only addressed transformational leadership and its impact on Governance and Development in African Nations without necessarily measuring the dimensions of transformational leadership such as intellectual stimulation. Umulisa (2020), states that little or no studies which look at the relationship between intellectual stimulation of transformational leadership style and the growth of Intra-EAC trade has been done and that there is a great need to understand this relationship in the EAC context. This study therefore yields a knowledge gap. This study thus sought to fill the knowledge and contextual gaps by studying the influence of intellectual stimulation behavior of the Council of Minister on the growth of Intra-Regional Trade in EAC. The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of intellectual stimulation behavior of the Council of Minister of the EAC on the growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the Community.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the Positivism research philosophy and applied sequential explanatory mixed method approach targeting all the two hundred and five senior trade officers in the East African Community (EAC) Partner States and senior officers at the EAC headquarters. The adoption of this method was informed by the nature of the issue under investigation. As explained by Creswell and Creswell (2003) mixed method sequential explanatory design consists of two distinct phases: quantitative and qualitative phase. Quantitative data was collected from Senior Trade Officers in the East African Community (EAC) who were sampled randomly from each of the then six member states of EAC. In each Country Thirty Senior Trade officers were identified. Data was them collected from them through cross-sectional surveys that employed both online and physical questionnaires that were analyzed and informed the qualitative phase. Qualitative data was collected through key informant interviews with twenty-five senior officers selected randomly

from the EAC secretariat. This allowed for triangulation of emerging findings and generation of rich contextual information as well as provide a comprehensive picture of the influence of intellectual stimulation behavior of the Council of Minister of the EAC on the growth of Intra-Regional Trade in the Community.

The research procedures involved obtaining approval first from the university supervisors, followed by the University's Internal Review Board (IRB), license from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovations (NACOSTI) and, finally a letter from the EAC Secretary General for collecting data from the six partner states. A pilot study involving 10% of the sample size was conducted aimed at checking the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Using Cronbach's Alpha (α) the instruments were found reliable since the value was greater than 0.7. Validity of the instruments was also tested with four respondents and input from the supervisors. Descriptive and inferential data analysis were conducted including mean standard deviation, factor analysis, analysis of variance and regression analysis. Before proceeding to undertake regression analysis various tests including, linearity, test for multicollinearity, tests for normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity were conducted

III. RESULTS

The results and analysis of the data relating to the influence of Idealized Influence on the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC is presented. From the 138 questionnaires administered to trade officers in each partner state, 123 were successfully completed and returned. Similarly, in the case of interview schedule, all the respondents were conducted and responded.

Descriptive Statistics of the Influence of Idealized Influence of Council members of the EAC

The analysis in table 1 indicate low variability on the respondents' views regarding how intellectual stimulation of council members influences the perceived growth of intra-regional trade. The mean score was 4.1 with standard deviation of 0.78.

Table 1:

Mean and Standard Deviation for Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual Stimulation			
Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Mean and Standard Deviation for the three statements	123	4.14	0.78
The Council Members encourage the Senior Trade Officers of the EAC to take measured risks in solving problems.	123	4.0244	.70668
The Council Members encourage the Senior Trade Officer of the EAC to be innovative by questioning traditional ways of doing things.	123	4.1382	.87145
The Council Members enhance open communication among the Senior Trade Officers of the EAC.	123	4.2602	.76648

Mean and Standard Deviation for Intellectual Stimulation and the growth of intra-regional Exports in the EAC

In terms of the extent of intellectual stimulation on influence by the members of the council on the growth of intra-regional exports, the mean was 4.3 with standard deviation of 0.83. The results are summarized in 4.2.

Table 2:

Mean and Standard Deviation for Intellectual Stimulation and the growth of intra-regional Exports in the EAC

Export			
Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Mean and Standard Deviation for the three statements	123	4.43	0.83
To what extent does the Council of Ministers' ability to encourage the Senior Trade Officers in the partner states to take measured risk while doing their work, influence the growth Intra-Regional exports in the EAC?	123	4.4065	.85734
To what extent does the Council Members of the EAC influence the growth of Intra-Regional Exports by encouraging Innovation by the Senior Trade Officers of the EAC partner states?	123	4.4146	.88639
To what extent does the Councils Members of the EAC influence the growth of Intra-Regional Exports by encouraging Open Communication among the Senior Trade Officers of the EAC partner states?	123	4.4634	.76064

Mean and Standard Deviation for Intellectual Stimulation and the growth of intra-regional Imports in the EAC

With regards to the extent of intellectual stimulation influence by the members of the council on the growth of intra-regional imports, provides a summary of the results. As shown in the table, the mean value was 4.4 with a standard deviation of 0.83. These shows that on average respondents agreed that intellectual stimulation of the council of ministers on average has implication the growth of intra-regional imports in the EAC region.

Table 3:

Mean and Standard Deviation for Intellectual Stimulation and the growth of intra-regional Imports in the EAC

Import			
Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Mean and Standard Deviation for the three statements	123	4.44	0.83
To what extent does the Council Members' ability to encourage the Senior Trade Officers in the partner states to take measured risk while doing their work, influence the growth Intra-Regional Imports in the EAC?	123	4.4553	.82235
To what extent does the Council Members of the EAC influence the growth of Intra-Regional Imports by encouraging Innovativeness by the Senior Trade Officers of the EAC partner states?	123	4.4228	.83967
To what extent does the Councils Members of the EAC influence the growth of Intra-Regional Imports by encouraging Open Communication among the Senior Trade Officers of the EAC partner states?	123	4.4715	.84276

Factor Analysis; KMO and Bartlett's Test for Intellectual Stimulation

Factor analysis was conducted and results presented as summarized in Table 4.4. The results show the KMO value of 0.698 which is within the acceptable range. The analysis also points to the strength of the significant relationship that exist between the variable and can be used to test the null hypothesis using the Bartlett‟s test of sphericity.

Table 4:
KMO and Bartlett's Test for Intellectual Stimulation

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.698
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	191.314
	Df	3
	Sig.	0.000

Diagnostic Tests for Intellectual Stimulation and Growth of Intra Trade

This study endeavored to establish whether the assumptions for linear regression were adhered to for inspirational motivation behaviour by conducting the necessary. These included test for multicollinearity, normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity. The study applied Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) to measure the extent of correlation of the independent variables. As explained by Kim (2019), independent variables are said to be highly correlated if the VIF values exceed 10. The results show that the relationship between intellectual stimulation and the growth of intra-regional trade was linear with VIF 5.71. Autocorrelation was conducted using Durbin-Watson values of are between 0-4. A value below zero is considered to be negative autocorrelation between the error terms, while a value above 4 is considered to be a strong positive autocorrelation between the error terms. The Durbin-Watson value was 1.707 and 1.687, respectively an indication that there was no autocorrelation.

Heteroscedasticity is the measure of the variability of the modeling errors and when the modeling errors do not have the same variance, the model is considered heteroscedastic with a scatter plot showing a linear pattern. In case the modeling errors have the same variance, the model is said to be homoscedastic or do not have heteroscedastic problem with a scatter plots being diffused. The scatter plot for this study revealed that the plots were diffused and do not form a specific pattern indicating that there is no heteroscedastic problem in the regression model between intellectual stimulation and growth of intra trade in the region. In terms of normality of the data skewness and kurtosis were conducted. The results established the presence of negative skewness, though not excessive as the values were within the range of -2 to +2. On the other hand, the values for kurtosis were also within the acceptable range of -7 to +7, thus did not show excessive kurtosis.

Linearity test examines the existence of a linear relationship between variables such that the value of the dependent variable is a straight-line function of the independent variable. Table 4.5 shows the findings of the linearity test for intellectual stimulation style of the council members and the growth of intra-regional exports in the EAC. The results show that the deviation from linearity, p value = 0.114, $p \leq .05$. A similar test on imports revealed p value = 0.088, $p \leq .05$. The study concluded that the slope of the regression line is different from zero, thus passes the linearity test and that the relationship was linear.

Table 5:

Linearity Test Between Intellectual Stimulation and Export

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Export * Intellectual Stimulation	Between Groups	(Combined)	49.001	10	4.900	20.407	.000
		Linearity	36.216	1	36.216	150.829	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	12.785	9	1.421	5.916	.114
	Within Groups		26.893	112	.240		
	Total		75.893	122			

Pearson Correlation analyzed indicated that there was a positive correlation between the perceived growth of intra-regional exports and the intellectual stimulation of council members' r (123) =0.0.691, $p<0.05$. The Pearson Correlation test for the relationship between intellectual stimulation and the perceived growth of intra-regional imports also indicated that it was positive and significant r (123) = 0.640, $p<0.05$. These results are presented in table 4.6.

Table 6:

Correlation Between Intellectual Stimulation Behavior of the Council Members on the growth of Intra-Regional in the EAC

		Intellectual Stimulation
Export	Pearson Correlation	.691**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123
Import	Pearson Correlation	.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	123

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

Chi-Square Test

Chi-square is a statistical test method used for examining the goodness of fit between a set of observed values and those expected theoretically. In the study, this was done to assess the strength of relationship between intellectual stimulation and the growth of intra-regional Exports as well as for imports. The results for are as presented on tables 4.7 and 4.8.

Chi-Square Test for Exports

Chi-square test was used to assess the strength of relationship between intellectual stimulation and the growth of intra-regional Exports. The findings for chi-square test as detailed in table 4.74, indicated that there was a strong association between the intellectual stimulation of the council members and the growth of intra-regional exports χ 2 (100, N=123) = 372.376, $p<0.05$.

Table 7:

Chi-Square Test for Intellectual Stimulation of the Council Members and the Growth of Intra-Regional Export in EAC

Chi-Square Tests	
	Value
Pearson Chi-Square	372.376[a]
Df	100.000
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.000
N of Valid Cases	123

a. 114 cells (94.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Chi-Square Test for Intellectual Stimulation of the Council Members on the growth of Intra-Regional Imports in the EAC

Chi-square test was also used to assess the strength of relationship between intellectual stimulation and the growth of intra-regional imports. The findings for chi-square test as detailed in table 4.8, show that there was a strong association between the intellectual stimulation of the council members and the growth of intra-regional imports χ 2 (100, N=123) = 377.714, p<0.05

Table 8:

Chi-Square Test for Intellectual Stimulation of the Council Members and the Growth of Intra-Regional Import in EAC

Chi-Square Tests	
	Value
Pearson Chi-Square	377.714[a]
Df	100.000
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.000
N of Valid Cases	123

a. 114 cells (94.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Regression Analysis of Intellectual Stimulation and Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

As shown in table 4.9, R=0.685 shows a positive correlation, with a coefficient of determination R^2=0.470, while the adjusted R^2 was 0.465. The results show that intellectual stimulation contributes about 47% variance in the overall growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC when other factors are held constant, while the remaining 53% is accounted for by other factors.

Table 9:

Intellectual Stimulation and Growth of Intra-Regional Trade

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.685[a]	.470	.465	.56162

a. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual Stimulation

As presented in table 4.10, regression coefficients for intellectual stimulation (β) was 0 =.755, t(4.292)=10.351, p<.05 indicating a value that was less than the critical p-value of 0.05, thus the study rejected the null hypothesis. This was an indication that there was a significant and positive relationship between the intellectual stimulation of the council members and the growth of intra-regional imports in the EAC. Thus the study suggested that, any improvement in the intellectual stimulation of the council members, enhanced the growth intra-regional trade in the EAC by factor a factor of 0.755.

Table 10:

Regression Coefficients for Intellectual Stimulation

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.314	.306		4.292	.000
	Intellectual Stimulation	.755	.073	.685	10.351	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intraregional Trade

Analysis of Variance

To establish whether the intellectual stimulation of Council of Ministers had influence on the growth of intra-regional trade, analysis of variance was conducted. The results as summarized in Table 4.11 show that intellectual stimulation of Council of Ministers had significant influence on the growth of intra-regional trade {F (1,121) = 107.141, p<.05)}.

Table 11:

Regression ANOVA for Intellectual Stimulation

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.794	1	33.794	107.141	.000[b]
	Residual	38.165	121	0.315		
	Total	71.959	122			

a. Dependent Variable: Intra-Regional Trade
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual Stimulation

IV. DISCUSSION

Correlational analysis showed that intellectual stimulation behavior of the council of ministers is positively and significant correlated with growth of intra-regional trade with; r (123) =0.0.691, p<0.05 and r (123) = 0.640, p<0.05 for imports and exports respectively. The findings of the study are echoed by Kpodar and Imam (2016) who inquired into the role of risk taking on regional trade agreements (RTA) in a study conducted in 170 countries across the globe and reviewed data over the period of 1978–2012. The results of the regression analysis found that there was strong and significant relationship between risk taking and the growth of trade in RTA r(1165) = .583, p < .05. The study established that growth volatility in RTA was dependent on the risk apatite of the member countries and that the general principle of the higher risk higher return was also relevant to growth in Intra-Regional Trade. The study suggested that teams managing RTA must be empowered and allowed to take a significant amount of measured risk to ensure sustainable growth of Intra-Regional Trade. The study also holds that collective risk taking reduces the amount of risk for each individual country. These findings mirror the views of the respondents for this study with respect to the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. Similarly, a study in Spain by Coad, Segarra and Teruel (2016) showed that there is a strong and positive relationship between innovation and growth of sales.

In Malasya, Selim et al (2019) opined that employees from companies that encouraged creativity and innovation, were more agile and posted better performance outcomes thus causing desirable growth for their organizations. The study showed that Transformational initiative and development were identified with innovative authoritative execution. The findings were similar to the current study which confirmed that encouraging innovativeness among the senior trade officers, has a

significant and positive effect on the growth intra-regional trade in the EAC. The findings of this study are further supported by a study in Korea by Joo, Seo and Min (2018) which established that innovation directly and positively related to export growth among the manufacturing firms in the country an indication that government initiatives aimed at enabling firms to grow in the international markers through innovation was working effectively. The study concludes that innovation is critical to the growth of exports the large Korean firms. These finding corroborates the views of the senior trade officers who observed that by encouraging innovativeness, the council of ministers could enhance the growth of intra-regional trade in the region.

In Pakistan Wadho and Chaudhry (2018) reported similar results while examining textile and apparel manufacturing companies with regards to the association between innovativeness and the growth of exports and domestic sales. They study revealed a strong relationship between firms' innovativeness and the growth of export and domestic sales volumes. This mirrors the views of the senior trade officers regarding the relationship between encouraging innovativeness and the growth of intra-regional trade. The findings in the study in terms of the relationship between open communication and the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC is supported in the findings UNCTAD in the annual economic report of 2019 wherein it was reported that harnessing information and communications technology could help in the attainment of growth in Intra-Regional Trade in the African continent. The quantitative study on all the 54 member states on the African continent echoed the finding of this this by emphasizing that leadership that is able to encourage open communication and information flow, is better placed to enhance the growth of intra-regional trade in Africa. This finding are very similar to the views presented by the respondents where it was asserted that establishment of a formal communication channel among the decision makers in the various partner states, is critical in enhancing growth of intra-regional trade. In the ECOWAS member states, a study by Santos et al (2018) found a strong relationship between the attainment of growth Intra-Regional Trade in the ECOWAS region with effective communication of the regional policies to all the partner states identified to be necessary. Santos et al emphasized the fact that effective and seamless communication process is critical to the attainment of growth in Intra-Regional Trade and the concerned regional leaders need to pay more attention to this fact.

Conclusion

The results show a significant strong relationship between intellectual stimulation and growth of intra-regional trade expressed in terms of exports and imports; r (123) =0.0.691, p<0.05 and r (123) = 0.640, p<0.05 respectively. Further analysis revealed that intellectual stimulation of the council members significantly predict the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC [R2=.409, $F(1,121) = 83.782$, $p<.05$; $\beta = .755$, t(4.292)=10.351, $p<.05$]. It is therefore inferred that intellectual stimulation of the council members plays an important role in influencing the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. For the growth of intra-regional trade, the council members should be aware of the impact of their intellectual stimulation behavior in enhancing the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC. This could be realized by the Council of Ministers encouraging senior trade officers willing to take risks be innovative while encouraging shared and structured communication by the council members aimed at enhancing growth of intra-regional trade.

Recommendations

To enhance the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC, the council of ministers need to encourage risk taking, creative innovation and open communication by the senior trade officers in the partner states. The council of ministers could achieve this by developing common communication forums for the senior trade officer in addition to encouraging the senior trade officers to exchange ideas and suggest innovative ways that can enhance the growth of trade in the region. These will encourage the senior trade officers to enhance the facilitation of increased growth of trade in the region. This study pointed to the fact that there is a significant positive relationship between intellectual stimulation of the council of ministers and the growth of intra-regional trade in the EAC.

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