

Effects of Trade Facilitation Agreement on Border Security

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the border security implications (proxy by small arms and light weapons (SALWs)) on trade facilitation within Nigerian borders and its immediate border countries of Benin Republic, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. The study employed panel OLS method using linear gravity framework for secondary data between 2017 and 2022. The study found that, Ease of Doing Business (EDB) reduces SALWs. Thus, improves border security. The coefficient of EDB is -0.214096, and has a p-values $< 5\%$ which statistically reduces SALWs cross-border trade. Also, Logistics Performance Index (LPI), proxy for trade facilitation within the period under review decelerates cross-border trade in SALWs. As a result, the LPI coefficient is -3.047479, which is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. The study concludes that trade facilitation contributes to border security by decreasing cross-border SALWs and, therefore recommends that, trade facilitation be secured using modern border-protection tactics. This necessitates thorough security profiling and the use of latest technologies, such as the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI), non-intrusive scanners, etc, in order to guarantee maximum security in both imports and exports from country of origin to the final destination.

Keywords: Trade Facilitation, Customs, Border Security, Regional Trade Agreement.

INTRODUCTION

The literature has focused on the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and border instability. Scholars are divided on whether the deployment of trade facilitation across Nigerian borders poses a security risk. Following a number of arguments that unrestricted trade promotes growth-welfare convergence, increases specialization, and boosts competitiveness, this debate has gained traction. Another point of view disagrees with the imperative of free trade, but argues that border protection ensures national security and, at the very least, the survival of newborn industries, prevents dumping, and ensures security.

Essentially, the reasoning of TFAs is to promote trade and its contributions to global development (OECD, 2005; McLinden et al., 2011; Milner, Morrissey, & Zgovu, 2008). TFA came after the WTO's Bali accord in 1993 and the provisions of the General Accord on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1994. TFA has been a true instrument for global trade since its debut in 2017, enabling seamless clearance and the establishment of an acceptable handling framework for trade-related activity at the entry points. Trade facilitation is an integrated global trade policy that aims to increase cross-border trade by improving trade competitiveness, lowering transaction costs, lowering tariffs, and accelerating inclusive interregional trade channels, all of which contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (WTO, 2013, Widdowson & World Bank, 2007, Bolhofer, 2007).

Trade facilitation has no commonly acknowledged definition (Helble, Shepherd, & Wilson, 2007; McLinden, Fanta, Widdowson, & Doyle, 2011). According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), trade facilitation facilitates regional integration as well as global agreements on globalization and trade (financial) liberalization. The Doha Declaration asserts that trade facilitation includes the prompt release and clearing of commodities in transit (WTO, 2008). Trade facilitation is a major policy focus required to stimulate trade's contributions to growth and development goals, particularly in emerging nations. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) for example, use trade facilitation measures to expand the frontier of interregional economic connections among African economies (Buyonge & Kireeva, 2007). The AfCFTA intends to improve commercial facilitation among African countries. Chauvin and Maur (2019) examined the AfCFTA's potential benefits in greater depth, emphasizing the significance of strengthening border administration and infrastructure in order to fulfill the agreement's potential.

The underlying philosophy that underpins global trade facilitation is that it reduces cross-border trade costs and poverty by enhancing development goals (Rippel, 2011); expands economic efficiency (Eliason, 2015); boosts export performance (Portugal-Perez & Wilson, 2010); decreases trade barriers and improves bilateral trade (Felipe & Kumar, 2010); and accelerates trade competitiveness and cross-border e-commerce (Duval & Mengjing, 2017; Duval Martincus

et al (2013) investigated the influence of the European Union (EU) single market on trade and discovered that it resulted in increased intra-EU trade and more export diversification. Breda and Whelan (2018) discovered that trade facilitation has a favorable impact on trade, tourism, and economic development, among other things.

The trade facilitation agreement covers a variety of trade facilitation measures, which are divided into twelve articles grouped into trade facilitation, trade flows (Article 2-5), and border management (Article 6-10). According to the World Customs Organization (WCO), specific transparency and predictability supports corporate growth (OECD, 2012; OECD, 2015). According to the WTO, full implementation of the TFA across the globe will reduce global trade costs by an estimated 14.3 percent and increase global export gains to between US\$750 billion and US\$1 trillion per year (OECD & WTO, 2007; Kiek, n.d.). According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a 1% reduction in trade-related transaction costs results in a US\$43 billion worldwide gain (OECD, 2003). As a result, the global community has continued to acknowledge the importance of trade facilitation in the international trade environment, committing more than US\$ 101 million in 2000 to US\$ 391 million in 2006 (WTO/OECD, 2008). The implementation of TFAs is primarily motivated by the fact that trade is becoming an increasingly important component of the global value chain (UNCTAD, 2016). According to Hoekman and Shepherd (2015), the cost of delays, inefficiency, and corruption can add more than 15% to the pricing of products and services, reducing trade competitiveness. Furthermore, due to the global elimination of tariffs on the manufacturing sector, the GDP of nations with fully implemented trade facilitation can be 2-3 times larger than that of non-trade facilitating countries. Trade facilitation was ratified in the region to boost ECOWAS trade gains.

In 2020, global military spending gulps about \$20 trillion (Erdogan et al. 2022). This amounts to around 8.6% of world GDP (Elveren 2022). According to Abramson (2021), the year-on-year estimate of the trade in SALWs, i.e., conventional armaments, both large and small, is around \$690 billion. The West, Israel, Russia, and China, among others, have been accused of supplying SALWs to developing countries. Around the world, an estimated 700 million SALWs exist, frequently destabilizing global security and architecture and disrupting global justice (Abramson 2021). Another factor working against SALWs regulation is the expansion of the arms business and its powerful political allies (Simon 2012), as well as unfettered worldwide cross-border transactions in conventional weaponry, particularly SALWs (Adejumo et al. 2022). According to Feinstein and Choonara (2020), fiscal leverage on arms trades accounts for around 40% of all global trade misconduct.

Spencer (2007), on the other hand, claimed that the border is the primary protection against terrorism and the secondary defense for the nation's territorial integrity. Border security is a priority on the national development and security agenda. According to the World Bank (2017), an astounding \$5 billion (N1.45 trillion) in various items is trafficked into Nigeria through Benin Republic alone each year. This sum represents approximately 15% of total smuggled products

via that border. The World Bank report also stated that over \$400 million (N116 billion), or around 25% of the total current annual income received by the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), is lost due to illicit smuggling over sub-regional boundaries. Similarly, Ogunkoya (2017) said that around 85% of the \$1.4 billion in textile materials that flood the country each year is smuggled. According to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) (2017), more than 350 million illegal light weapons are imported into Nigeria, This accounted for 70% of illicit small guns in West Africa. Some of the weapons are claimed to have originated in Mali and Libya, both of which have recently experienced conflict.

The presence of so many illicit weapons in Nigeria endangers peaceful coexistence. The trafficking of weapons is expanding at an alarming rate. The most commonly trafficked firearms are SALWs. According to the International Crisis Group, the Herders-Farmers conflict in Nigeria killed around 1,300 people. Aside from the 12 billion rounds of ammunition manufactured annually, it is believed that more than 857 million SALWs are currently in circulation. There are an estimated 10 million SALWs in Africa, with over one million SALWs in Nigeria. The expanding dynamics of illicit drug trade, human trafficking, and counterfeit goods, among other things, have the potential to disturb economic stability. In today's world, the interconnectedness of border crimes has taken on a very serious dimension. For example, militias, Boko Haram, and drug lords with international ties could use Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) to launch new attacks in the region.

The literature, however, is deafeningly silent on the extent to which trade facilitation affects border security along Nigeria's land borders and at the points where it intersects with immediate neighbors of Niger Republic, Benin, Chad, and Cameroon. Given the rising difficulties surrounding border security, it is critical to explore whether trade facilitation affects border security. This paper specifically aims to compute the impact of trade facilitation on SALWs (SALWs). As a result, the driving question becomes whether trade facilitation increases cross-border SALWs trade, and, hat effect does trade facilitation have on border security along Nigeria's and its neighbors' borders?

The remaining sections of this paper include literature review, methods, results and discussion, as well as conclusion and recommendation.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Trade facilitation is defined as the strategic simplification and harmonization of international trade procedures (WTO, 1998; Sadikov, 2007; Shepherd & Wilson, 2009; Shepherd, 2016).

Trade facilitation is defined by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) as the simplification, standardization, and harmonization of procedures and associated information required for international payment (OECD, 2001). In the context of WCO trade facilitation, avoidance of needless trade restrictions is implied (WCO, 2005, 2006).

According to the OECD, trade facilitation encompasses all policies aimed at smoothing and facilitating trade flows and labor migration. It entails reducing red tape in international trade as well as upgrading trade procedures more efficiently (Grainger, 2011). Digital trade facilitation is the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to simplify and automate international trade procedures and RTAs, such as the WTO's RTAs Information System (RTA-IS), E-Custom Systems & Customs automation and trade facilitation, and paperless trade implementation (TFPI) (Duval & Mengjing, 2017).

According to OECD, trade facilitation include the following indicators shown in table 1.

Table 1: OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators

Indicators	Description
Information Availability	Enquiry points, publication of trade information, including on internet.
Involvement of the Trade community (Consultation)	Structures for consultation, established guidelines for consultation, publication of draft, existence of notice-and-comment frameworks.
Advance Rulings	Prior statements by the administration to requesting traders, concerning the classification, origin, valuation method, etc.,.
Appeal Procedures	The possibility and modalities to appeal administrative decisions by border agencies.
Fees and Charges	Discipline on the fees and charges imposed on imports and exports; disciplines on penalties.
Formalities-Documents	Acceptance of copies, simplification of trade document; harmonization in accordance with international standards.
Formalities-Automation	Electronic exchange of data, automated border procedures.
Formalities-Procedures	Streamlining of border control; Post-Clearance Audits; Authorized Economic Operators.
Internal Co-operation	Control delegation to Customs authorities; cooperation between border agencies of the country.
External Co-operation	Co-operation with neighboring and third countries.
Governance and Impartiality	Customs structure and functions, accountability, ethics policy,.

Source: OECD (n.d.).

Basically, the nexus between trade facilitation and border security can be conceptualized from the idea of Rippel (2011).

Table 2 Trade facilitation and Development Goals

Traditional Focus	Interventions	Targets
Custom-Border-Transit Management	Better border and Customs management.	Reduction of trade cost.
Logistic and Transport Services	Improving infrastructure.	Increase competitiveness of firms.
Physical Infrastructure	Open and competitive markets in logistics and services sectors.	Improved export performance.
Competitiveness	Harmonized Regional Standard.	More trade leads to employment and income, hence, economic growth and poverty reduction.

Source: Adapted from Rippel (2011)

Table 2 illustrates the relationship between border security, trade (Customs operations), and development. The table revealed that, trade facilitation is being expanded to address a broader agenda in economic development and trade. These include improvements to transportation infrastructure, the elimination of government corruption, the modernization of Customs administration, the elimination of other non-tariff trade obstacles, and export marketing and promotion (Rippel, 2011). The table further illustrate that trade facilitation has a direct impact on cross-border and capital movement (FDI) through cost competitiveness and an indirect impact on development via trade liberalization and globalization channels. TFAs implemented at borders continue to be a real policy approach required to increase global commerce, the worldwide trade value chain, and the contribution of global trade to GDP (per capita income) (Wilson, Mann, & Otsuki, 2004; Milner, Morrissey, & Zgovu, 2008).

The emerging velocity of SALWs spread is crucial for understanding the trajectory of cross-border crimes (Onuoha, 2011; Adejumo et al., 2021). According to the UN (1997), the quantum dimension of SALWs comprises those covered by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, such as mortars with calibers less than 100mm (Di Chiaro, 1998). Automatic assault weapons, rifles such as the AK-series Kalashnikovs, the USM-16, and the Israeli Uzi, PPGs, machine and sub-machine guns, shoulder-fire surface-air missiles (SAMs), and personal weapons would also be included in this category. The spread of SALWs has a growing impact on the nature of crime and criminality across borders. Many state and non-state players in West Africa got SALWs illegally through smuggling, putting the security architecture along the borders at risk. The prevalence of porous borders along Nigeria's borders (Benin, Cameroon, Niger Republic, and Togo) has historically enabled the illicit entry of weapons into the country. Transnational crimes, such as smuggling of contraband goods and other illicit commodities, illegal migration, child and human trafficking, and so on, pose a serious threat to national security across these borders. For example, despite trends in trade facilitation, literature recognizes the worsening Nigeria-Benin land border. Separately, scholars such as Dadur and

Aliyu (2021) and Bassey and Asira (2022) have informed the literature about decreasing border management and, on the other hand, increased crime and gun trafficking across borders.

Theoretical Framework

Transnationalism theory would provide a deep backdrop to the nexus underpinning cross-border crime in connection with trade facilitation and border insecurity, taking into account SALWs developed by Randolph Bourne in the early twentieth century as a result of increased interconnectivity between people and receding economic and social significance of borders among nation-states (Transnationalism, 2016). Transnationalism focuses on the imperative of processes involving human voluntary mobility and the maintenance of multi-stranded social interactions that connect their cultures of origin and host countries (Rosemberg, Boutain, & Mohammed, 2016).

The notion is increasingly based on the functional integration and various interactions or links of individuals, states, and institutions across borders or beyond state boundaries, which can have an impact on the state capabilities. Globalization is critical in transnationalism theory. It accounts for the increase in human integration that occurs in one country and has an effect on another (Soehi & Waldinger, 2012). The notion of transnationalism is based on the following untested hypothesis: i. people are not as much bound to place as they are to space and technology. ii. Cultural connectedness, reproduction, and human movement exist. iii. Some immigrants keep up with and influence political events in both their home and host countries. iv. Increased cross-border operations and contacts have an impact on state capability (Rosemberg et al, 2016).

Border security in trade flows is thus important in determining how trade facilitation facilitates trade. In international trade literature, the relationship between trade facilitation and border control is extensive and significant. According to Limao and Venables (2001), eliminating border delays by 10% can improve bilateral trade by up to 6%. Djankov et al (2010) discovered that a one-day reduction in border clearance time might result in a 1% increase in trade. Trade facilitation is frequently linked to the functions of national Customs administrations. The TFAs include measures aimed at facilitating commerce (Articles 1–11) as well as fostering compliance and Customs cooperation (Article 12). On the other hand, some argue that opening borders to encourage international trade must imply decreasing border protection (Bersin, 2012). Reducing the time necessary for imported items to be delivered could increase national government revenue (Helbe, Shepherd, & Wilson, 2007, Zaki, 2008; Engman, 2005). Customs reforms correlate more with business growth and less with tariffs established in international discussions (Mann, 2012). Trade restrictions become development barriers (Kituyi, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

The gravity model is a popular paradigm in inter-regional literature for explaining bilateral international interactions. It is thus a natural starting point to investigate the impact of trade facilitation on border insecurity. The gravity model is the standard tool for estimating drivers of international patterns of products, services, or FDI based on geography and history. Such a

model demonstrates the importance of similar boundaries, geographic configurations, and historical patterns in describing international interactions between any two countries. It can be stated in its classic form by the following equation:

$$X_{ijt} = f(Y_{it}, Y_{jt}, D_{ij}) + \mu_{it} \tag{1}$$

where X_{ijt} is the real bilateral flow of international transaction under consideration between country i and country j at time t , Y_{it} and Y_{jt} are real GDP of country i and j , γ_{it} and γ_{jt} are per capita real GDP. D_{ij} is a generic measure of distance or transaction costs between i and j . It usually includes transport costs, but may also include all other possible transaction costs, as it will be shown next. μ_{it} is an error term. The panel framework is given as;

$$\ln X_{ijt} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \ln(Y_{it} Y_{jt}) + \alpha_2 \ln(\gamma_{it} \gamma_{jt}) + U_{ijt} \tag{2}$$

$$SALW_{ijt} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 (RGDP_{it} RGDP_{jt}) + \alpha_2 (LPI_{it} LPI_{jt}) + \alpha_3 (EDB_{it} EDB_{jt}) + \alpha_4 (Dist_{it} Dist_{jt}) + \alpha_5 (DUM_{it} DUM_{jt}) + U_{ijt} \tag{3}$$

Where SALWs = proxy for border security, RGDP = Real Gross Domestic Product (proxy for income), EDB = Ease of Doing Business, LPI = Logistic Performance Index, Dummy (0,1) for economic integration, member of ECOWAS=1 and non-ECOWAS member=0, U= stochastic variable, α_0 = intercept, α_t = slopes, for j and i country

Given the linear gravity model in equation (2), the log transformation (ln) was relaxed in this work. This study examined the influence of trade facilitation on border security (as represented by SALWs) inside Nigeria and its neighbors. In this study, a quasi-experimental (expo facto) research design is used. The ADF unit root test coefficient gives statistical context for determining if trade facilitation weakens border security. The EDB and LPI serve as proxies for trade facilitation. As a result, secondary data was used to calculate ranges between 2017 and 2022 utilizing Pooled Ordinary Least Squares and its BLUE characteristics.

Table 1: ADF Unit Root

Variable	At Levels (I(0))	First Differencing (I(1))
EDB	-1.521744 (0.8021)	-5.349365 (0.0006)
DISTANCE	-1.566024 (0.7854)	-5.756434 (0.0002)
DRUG	2.297529 (0.4239)	-5.841791 (0.0002)
LPI	-3.249620 (0.0321)	
RGDP	-1.318950 (0.8660)	-5.723178 (0.0002)
SALWs	-1.430944	-6.026665

	(0.8332)	(0.0001)
SMUG	-1.417721	-6.101013
	(0.8374)	(0.0001)
TERROR	-2.073949	-5.026474
	(0.5412)	(0.0015)
TRAFFICKING	-1.417721	-6.101013
	(0.8374)	(0.0001)

Source: Author's Computation from EViews 11

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Small Arms and Light Weapons Results

Dependent Variable: SALW

Method: Panel Least Squares

Date: 07/10/23 Time: 13:42

Sample: 2017 2023

Periods included: 7

Cross-sections included: 5

Total panel (balanced) observations: 35

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LPI	-3.047479	0.511142	-5.962104	0.0000
DUMMY	1.947628	0.542593	3.589485	0.0012
DISTANCE	0.000733	0.000438	1.673114	0.1051
EDB	-0.214096	0.053013	-4.038525	0.0004
RGDP	-1.21E-14	2.50E-14	-0.483618	0.6323
C	22.97096	2.310921	9.940177	0.0000

	Mean	Dependent	
R-squared	0.713160	Variable	7.200000
Adjusted R-squared	0.663705	S.D. dependent var	1.044594
S.E. of regression	0.605770	Akaike info criterion	1.990172
Sum squared resid	10.64176	Schwarz criterion	2.256803
Log likelihood	-28.82800	Hannan-Quinn criter.	2.082213
F-statistic	14.42035	Durbin-Watson stat	2.025989
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		

Source: Author's Computation from EViews 11

Table 2 shows that small and light weapons were a function of LPI, EDB, and other check variables such as RGDP, distance, and dummy, among others. SALWs decreased by 304%,

increased by 194%, increased by 0.073%, decreased by 21.4%, and decreased by 1.21E-12 (0.000000000012)% with a 1% change in LPI, dummy, distance, ease of doing business, and RGDP. The adjusted R2 of the result is 66.3%, implying that 33.7% of the causal factors are not included in the model. At 5%, the F-test is statistically significant.

The apriori indicators of LPI and EDB (used to proxy trade facilitation) are consistent with the economic theory that trade facilitation reduces cross-border SALWs. At 5%, the result is statistically significant. The findings are congruent with those of Cherkashin, Demidova, Weisman, (2019) and Santos and Perez (2016), who discovered that enhanced trade facilitation measures such as efficient Customs procedures and information sharing, can aid in the reduction of illicit arms trafficking. Furthermore, the dummy variable that quantifies ECOWAS produces a non-conforming result. The positive dummy variable coefficient implies that economic integration tends to boost cross-border SALWs. Economic growth, on the other hand, was shown to be negative and statistically negligible.

Table 3: Small Arms and Light Weapons and Other Cross-border crime

Dependent Variable: SALW

Method: Panel Least Squares

Date: 07/10/23 Time: 14:16

Sample: 2017 2023

Periods included: 7

Cross-sections included: 5

Total panel (balanced) observations: 35

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
DUMMY	0.130228	0.019306	6.745469	0.0000
DRUG	-0.032022	0.031948	-1.002316	0.3242
TERROR	-0.024800	0.007009	-3.538300	0.0013
TRAFFICKING	0.418111	0.034414	12.14947	0.0000
SMUG	0.768967	0.014545	52.86991	0.0000
R-squared	0.937623	Mean dependent var	7.200000	
Adjusted R-squared	0.927306	S.D. dependent var	1.044594	
S.E. of regression	0.054220	Akaike info criterion	-2.859965	
Sum squared resid	0.088195	Schwarz criterion	-2.637773	
Log likelihood	55.04939	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-2.783264	
Durbin-Watson stat	2.145379			

Source: Author's Computation from EViews 11

Table 3 estimates the prevalence of SALWs as a function of dummy variables such as narcotics, terrorism, trafficking, and smuggling. The outcome shows with a 1% change in the dummy variable, drug trafficking, terrorism, human trafficking, and smuggling, SALWs changed by 13.0 percent (Pvalue 5%), 3.2 percent (Pvalue > 5%), 2.4 percent (Pvalue 5%), 41.8 percent (Pvalue 5%), and 76.8 percent (Pvalue 5%), respectively. The a priori expectation of drug, dummy, and terrorism did not materialize. The apriori indications for trafficking and smuggling, on the other hand, arrived with proper signs. As a result, it is projected that terrorism, drugs, trafficking, and smuggling will facilitate cross-border trade in SALWs. The percentage of adjusted R squared is 92 percent. This means that trafficking, terrorism, smuggling, dummy, and narcotics explain the majority of the variation in the dependent variable (SALWs). The stochastic term accounts for the remaining 6%.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the study's findings in tables 2 and 3, EDB reduces SALWs and, hence, improves border security. The EDB coefficient is -0.214096, with a p-value of 5% which statistically diminishes cross-border SALWs trading. As a result, trade facilitation (as represented by the EDB) increases border security. During the review period, the LPI (proxy for trade facilitation) slows cross-border trade in SALWs. As a result, the LPI coefficient is -3.047479, which is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance.

Furthermore, this study discovered that economic integration across borders, smuggling, and trafficking are enhancers of SALWs in Nigeria and its immediate neighbors. The study, on the other hand, discovered that drug-related offenses and terrorism are less responsive to SALWs. This could imply that the drug trade is not hostile in nature, and is instead conducted by cartels that are unbothered by competition, as seen in the American region. As a result, the usage of SALWs is not critical in the drug trade. Another possible argument is that the degree of terrorism is more fiercely operationalized by advanced weapons that are not within the range of SALWs. As a result, this study suggests that trade facilitation be secured by incorporating modern border-protection tactics. This necessitates rigorous security profiling using contemporary technology, such as the deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI), to ensure optimum security and prevent revenue leakages from the country of origin to the final destination.

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