



# IMPACT OF BORDER CLOSURE ON THE ECONOMY OF BORDER COMMUNITIES: A STUDY OF KAMBA TOWN, DANDI LOCAL GOVERNMENT KEBBI STATE, NORTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT :

This study investigates the impact of border closure on the economy of Kamba Town in Kebbi State, Northwestern Nigeria. The closure of Nigeria's land borders, announced on August 20, 2019, and lasting for sixteen months, aimed to curb smuggling and enhance local production but has generated mixed reactions. The study addresses a noticeable knowledge gap regarding the specific effects of this policy on Kamba Town, focusing on economic activities, informal trade and household welfare. Using a cross-sectional survey approach, data was collected from 500 respondents and analyzed to understand these impacts. The results indicate significant negative effects on the informal economy, with 46% of respondents reporting severe negative impacts on their trade activities and 42% noting significant price increases. Household welfare was also adversely affected, with 43% of respondents struggling to afford basic necessities and 36.4% experiencing a significant decrease in spending. The hypothesis testing, using chi-square statistics, revealed a significant reduction in household incomes, rejecting the null hypothesis. The findings underscore the need for alternative measures to address smuggling and security concerns without prolonged border closures. Recommendations include supporting local businesses, providing financial assistance to affected households and promoting economic diversification. The study contributes valuable insights for policymakers to make informed decisions that balance security objectives with economic welfare.

**Keywords:** Border closure, informal economy, household welfare, Kamba Town, economic impact

## Introduction :

International Trade has been one way through which exchange of goods and services occur across state borders. States rely on international trade in order to foster its economy as no nation can completely isolate itself economically. It has been observed that the Nigerian Economy rely on international trade, causing decline in the production of locally made goods and services rendered. By implication, the Nigerian government formulated policies on Land Border Closure to help regulate the inflow of goods and services into the country [21].

The Nigerian State led by President Muhammadu Buhari ordered the partial closure of all Nigerian land borders with her neighbours such as Benin Republic, Cameroun, Chad and Niger. The land border closure was announced on the 20th August, 2019 and lasted for sixteen months. This policy on border closure was as a result of the federal government's growing concern over increase in smuggling of contra-band agro-allied products (especially rice and poultry products), petroleum products (especially premium motor spirit), influx of illegal migrants into the country, trafficking in human beings (especially women and children) and drugs, proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), and the need to strengthen internal security.

The closure of Nigeria's land borders with her neighbors was fully consolidated with further restrictions on import and export of goods through the land borders. As pointed out by the government, this policy was part of the efforts and measures to protect local industries (manufacturing and agricultural sectors), curb smuggling, boost local production and achieve food security, create jobs for the teeming unemployed Nigerians and guarantee national security. The then Comptroller General of the Nigerian Customs Service, Hameed Ali, officially confirmed the total shutdown in trade across Nigeria's land borders, including goods that has been moving legally. [19] concludes that "All goods, for now are banned from being exported or imported through our land borders and that is to ensure we have total control over what comes in". However, the land border closure by the federal government has elicited positive and negative reactions within and outside the country. Within the country, there are positive reactions over the land border closure. Particularly, the Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria (RIFAN) has urged the federal government to sustain the closure of border which would help to boost the economy.

The Chairman of Niger State chapter of the association, Idris Abini, said the closure has increased rice production in the state due to increased demand by marketers and consumers. Abini opines that "the border closure is a step in the right direction because it is already increasing wealth among farmers as consumers are beginning to patronize local rice"[18].

The land border closure has however elicited negative reactions. The National President, Council of Managing Directors of Licensed Customs Agents (NCMDLCA), Lucky Amiwero, said that by the provisions of section 15 of the Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA), the Customs Boss does not have the power to issue a declaration on the restriction of the border. Besides, [20] stated that the restriction contradicts the continental trade protocols signed by Nigeria. [20] concludes that “In the ECOWAS protocol is the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement among others, which are being jeopardized as the case is”. The traders especially the informal ones who are engaged in border business as a means of livelihood have frowned at the policy which they argued has forced them out of business and further impoverished them. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), whose inputs and outputs pass through these borders have complained bitterly about the land closure to the extent that some of the companies have closed down. Thus, some of the manufacturers, such as cement manufacturers, have their trucks parked at the borders but could not cross because of the closure. Besides, some companies had their contracts terminated because of their inability to meet their contractual obligations.

It has become imperative for Nigerians to know the implications of border closure poses on the nation’s economy and national development. It is for this reason that this study is aimed at evaluating the land border closure in Nigeria on the household economy of Kamba residents. As a result of this, the study will also try to examine the consequences of the prolong closure of the land borders on Nigeria’s socio-economic activities. its consequences. The fourth looks into the impact of border closure on the economy. It also captures some of the reactions of African countries to Nigerian Border closure.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Border closure has become a divisive policy issue, generating discussions from different angles about its impacts on market dynamics, the economy and most importantly, the lives of ordinary residents of the border communities. Although existing literature offers significant insights into the wider implications of Border closure, there is still a noticeable knowledge gap about its impact, particularly in specific places like Kamba Town of Kebbi State, Northwestern Nigeria.

Kebbi State like Lagos, Ogun in the South west, Yobe and Borno in the North East and Sokoto, Jigawa in the North West have land borders linking Nigeria with Niger and Benin Republics. It is undeniably noticeable that border closure make it difficult task to strike a balance between economic progress and the welfare of the border Communities. The choice to close border alter household incomes, budgets, affect consumer behavior and impact the general welfare/relationships of the affected Communities.

The absence of a dedicated study focusing on the dynamics of border closure in Kamba town leaves policymakers and stakeholders without a comprehensive understanding of the potential repercussions on the ground. This research aims to address this critical knowledge gap by undertaking a detailed analysis of the economic consequences of border closure on households in Kamba.

As Kebbi State navigates the complexities of economic reform, including the current inflation, a thorough investigation is imperative to inform evidence-based decision-making. The outcomes of this study will not only offer academic contributions to the existing literature but also provide practical insights that can guide local policymakers, enhance socio-economic planning and ensure that the impact of such policy adjustments aligns with the broader goals of sustainable development and improved living standards the border communities of Kamba

### ***1.2 Research Questions***

1. What is the impact of border closure on the economic activities of Kamba Town's residents?
2. How has the border closure influenced the informal economy in Kamba Town?
3. What are the socio-economic consequences of the prolonged border closure on the welfare of households in Kamba Town?

### ***RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS***

The following null hypothesis is formulated and tested in this research work:

H<sub>01</sub>: The border closure has not significantly reduced the household incomes of residents in Kamba Town

### ***1.3 Objectives of the study***

The main aim of this research work is to carry out a comparative study of the impact of the implementation of the border closure policy on household economy Kamba in Dandi Local Government, Kebbi State, Nigeria. However, this research work shall meet the following specified objectives:

1. To assess the impact of border closure on the economic activities of Kamba Town's residents.
2. To analyze the influence of border closure on the informal economy in Kamba Town.
3. To examine the socio-economic consequences of the prolonged border closure on the welfare and consumer behavior of households in Kamba Town.

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## **2. Literature Review**

Governments, sovereign states, federated states, and other sub-national entities all have borders, which define the geographical boundaries of their political entities or legal jurisdictions. Borders are established through agreements between the political or social entities responsible for specific territory [11]. The size of external borders is partially or entirely controlled and may only be legally crossed at designated border checkpoints and border zones. Borders may also serve as an incentive to build buffer zones. Academic research has established a distinction between border and frontier, with the latter referring to a state of mind rather than state boundaries [3]. Borders are now widely recognized as a multi-leveled, multi-layered social phenomenon that affects

both the fundamental structure of society and human psychology. This has not always been the case but approaches to and interpretations of boundaries have changed in lockstep with broader discursive shifts in border understanding and framing. Traditional definitions and perceptions of boundaries have been called into question as the context in which they were established and existing has shifted.

Border studies has developed into an interdisciplinary field of study, with contributions from political scientists, sociologists, ethnologists, psychologists, anthropologists, linguists, economists, physical geographers, and even experts in more technological fields [2]. A closed border is one that prohibits individuals from travelling freely between different jurisdictions with few or no exceptions. These boundaries typically have fences or walls along which any gates or border crossings are closed, and if these border gates are opened, persons are typically only allowed to cross under exceptional circumstances. Perhaps the most famous example of a closed border is the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea. Perhaps the Berlin Wall was also referred to as a closed border [13]. Borders can be opened or closed based on an immigrant's entry status, duration, qualification, rights and obligations, and quotas. When and if someone is permitted to cross a border, regardless of whether they are students, laborers, soldiers, or immigrants, their occupation is referred to as their entrance status. The ability to cross a border is contingent upon one's position. The majority of states regulate border crossing by limiting the duration of any visit. Health, age, wealth, religion, and race all have an effect on admission requirements. Numerous countries, including Canada and Singapore, will admit wealthy immigrants who demonstrate an aptitude and willingness to contribute to the country [11].

Entrant's rights and obligations refer to the limits placed on those who have already been granted permission to cross a border; in order to remain in that country, you must adhere to specific government-established laws and regulations. A government may grant you permission to reside but not to work, and those who are permitted to work may face difficulty finding job due to the restrictions on the types of employment permitted. Quotas for entry are restrictions on the number of immigrants who can cross a border in a specified period. Even if an individual meets all of the standards for border crossing and the country to which they wish to travel has achieved its immigration quota, they may still be denied access [5].

According to [8], "the location of borders changes over time. These changes are a result of the historical, geographical, political, and other critical factors that surround the regions. The investigation was conducted in accordance with the Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST). Proponents of the hegemonic stability theory include Stephen Krasner, Robert Gilpin, George Modelski, and Robert Keohane. The primary tenet of this theory is that powerful governments or nations utilize their might and resources to ensure that weaker nations adhere to the stronger nations' beliefs and philosophies". This theoretical framework continues to be adequate for explaining the Nigerian state's closing of its land borders. On the other hand, hegemonic stability theorists believed that a command given at the expense of some self-government and benefits made possible by the order would be acceptable; and that relinquishing some potential to act in unison would be justified [15].

As a result, powerful states are more likely to adopt and implement policies to achieve or realize their objectives at any given time. Simultaneously, smaller or weaker countries will concede significant authority in exchange for material assistance, allowing these actions to compel decisions on their own turf as a result, the hegemonic stability theory (HST) exists to preserve stability and order, but the objective of boundaries is to specify the area to be excluded from comparative advantages or benefits calculations. Additionally, trade and immigration policies are influenced by state hegemony dynamics; as a result, this study concludes that Nigeria's power relation in the West African sub-region remains a force to be reckoned with as the region's largest economy, population, and military force. This provides Nigeria with the confidence to close all of its land borders in order to compel complete obedience from her weaker neighbors, who have been singled out for illegal and undocumented passage, the illegal importation of contraband goods, and the harboring of various criminals and terrorists in the region.

According to [12], a country's border is more than a map indicating the boundaries of a country's domain; it is a symbol of globalization based on trade conventions, agreements, and treaties, as well as the mobility of goods and services that is used to exert economic and political influence over unstable nations. This study demonstrates unequivocally how border limitations can be utilized to compel all other adjacent governments to implement necessary economic and security measures. Nigeria's deliberate influence over the sub-region has converted its border-sealing tactics from an internal matter into West African economic, political, and diplomatic difficulties. [17] Stressed that the Nigerian government implemented a land border closure policy in the interest of national security, allowing goods and people to be moved between Nigeria and her neighbors such as Niger Republic, Benin Republic, Chad, Togo, and Cameroon on an informal basis, with temporary clandestine workers, traders, cross-border workers, professionals, and refugees moving from one country to the next (ECOWAS). As a result, cross-border migration

between Nigeria and its neighbors receives less scrutiny, and governments are less willing to act. Additionally, as modern mobility has a detrimental effect on the nation's security, it is progressively becoming a matter requiring government policy (Nigeria). This facilitates the spread of foreign violence and criminality across national borders. As a result, the Nigerian government began a policy to close the country's land borders.

According to [2], the Nigerian authorities have outlined the fundamental reasons for sealing the country's land borders. Essentially, it is vital to enhance domestic agriculture and boost national productivity growth, hence reducing product smuggling and significantly cutting illegal rice imports. Additionally, the government's justification for the border closure includes blocking the export of inexpensive fuel to the Niger Republic, Benin, and Cameroon. Nigeria's administration has chosen to close the border as a result. The federal government, through the Nigeria Customs Service, enforced the law governing the closure of the country's land borders in a circular reference no. NCS/ENF/ABJ/058/S.24 dated August 20, 2019, in order to prevent the sale or transfer of goods and services into the country.

[2] Opined that the country's land borders were closed as a result of the government's efforts to strengthen the country's domestic agricultural sectors and boost productivity in order to reduce smuggling of goods into the country, particularly the unlawful flow of foreign rice. Additionally, the government justifies the border closure by prohibiting subsidized gasoline exports to the Niger Republic, Benin, and Cameroon. Nigeria's administration has chosen to close the border as a result. The aforementioned land border closure policy was imposed after the Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria (CRFFN) determined that, despite its population of only 12 million, Benin Republic is the world's fifth largest rice importer. [3], said that Benin Republic imported rice worth \$996 million US dollars in 2018, with 98.2 percent of this imported rice smuggled into Nigeria without payment of required customs duty, tax, and other expenses, hence damaging Nigeria's economy. It's worth noting that Nigeria has 36 official land borders that act as entry and exit points. In Kebbi State, Bagudo, Maje, Lolo, Dole-kaina, Kamba, Kangiwa, and Bachaka; in Sokoto State, Illela, Gada, and SabonBirni; and in JibiyaMagama, Jibiya-Maje, Mai-Adua, Yardaji, Kongolom, BabbamMutum, Zango, BirninKuka [5].

### 3. Research Methodology

The methodology of this research was designed to comprehensively examine the impact of border closure on the economy of Kamba Town, focusing on key areas such as economic activities, informal trade and household welfare. A cross-sectional survey research approach was employed to gather data from a representative sample of residents in Kamba Town. The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire, which was distributed to 500 respondents across major neighborhoods in Kamba Town. The questionnaire was designed to capture detailed information on the respondents' experiences and perceptions regarding the border closure's effects on their economic activities, employment status, household income and general welfare. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling to ensure that different segments of the population were adequately represented. This method helped in obtaining a balanced and comprehensive view of the impact across various demographic groups. Data collection was conducted over a specified period, ensuring that the respondents had sufficient time to provide thoughtful and accurate responses. Once the data was collected, it was systematically coded and entered into a statistical software program for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were calculated to summarize the data and identify prevalent trends and patterns. To test the research hypothesis, chi-square statistics were employed. The chi-square test was used to determine whether there was a significant association between the border closure and the reduction in household incomes. This statistical method was chosen because it is effective for analyzing categorical data and assessing relationships between variables. The chi-square analysis involved comparing the observed frequencies of responses with the expected frequencies under the null hypothesis. Additionally, the methodology included a thorough literature review to contextualize the findings within the broader body of knowledge on border closures and their economic impacts. This review helped in identifying gaps in existing research and framing the study's objectives and research questions. Ethical considerations were also prioritized throughout the research process, ensuring that respondents' privacy and confidentiality were maintained. In conclusion, the research methodology was meticulously planned and executed to provide robust and reliable insights into the economic consequences of the border closure on Kamba Town. The combination of a cross-sectional survey, stratified random sampling, descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the issue and facilitated evidence-based recommendations for policymakers.

### 4. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Data presentation

##### 4.1.1 Response to Research Questions One (1)

**Table 1: Impact of border closure on the economic activities of Kamba Town's residents**

<i>Questionnaire Question</i>	<i>Option</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1. How has your business been affected by the border closure?	a. Significantly negatively	260	52
	b. Negatively	143	28.6
	c. No impact	59	11.8
	d. Positively	38	7.6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>
2. Have you experienced a change in your employment status since the border closure?	a. Lost job	120	24
	b. Reduced hours	270	54
	c. No change	80	16
	d. Gained job	30	6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>
3. How has the border closure impacted your household income?	a. Significant decrease	178	35.6
	b. Decrease	200	40
	c. No change	101	20.2
	d. Increase	21	4.2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

The data in Table 1 indicates that the border closure significantly impacted economic activities in Kamba Town, with 52% of residents reporting a negative effect on their businesses. Additionally, employment status was affected, with 24% losing their jobs and 54% experiencing reduced hours. Household income also saw notable decreases, with 35.6% reporting a significant drop and 40% experiencing a decrease.

##### 4.1.2 Response to Research Questions Two (2)

**Table 2: The influence of border closure on the informal economy in Kamba Town**

<i>Questionnaire Question</i>	<i>Option</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
How has the border closure affected your informal trade activities?	a. Severely negatively	230	46.0
	b. Negatively	150	30.0
	c. No impact	80	16.0
	d. Positively	40	8.0

Have you had to change the type of goods you trade in due to the border closure?	<i>TOTAL</i>	500	100
	a. Yes, significantly	200	40.0
	b. Yes, slightly	180	36.0
	c. No	80	16.0
	d. Started new trade	40	8.0
Has the border closure impacted the prices of goods in the informal economy?	<i>TOTAL</i>	500	100
	a. Significant increase	210	42.0
	b. Increase	180	36.0
	c. No change	80	16.0
	d. Decrease	30	6.0
<i>TOTAL</i>	500	100	

Table 2 above, shows the profound impact of border closure on the informal economy in Kamba Town. Almost half of the respondents (46.0%) reported that their informal trade activities were severely negatively affected, with an additional 30.0% experiencing negative impacts. Regarding changes in the types of goods traded, 40.0% of respondents had to significantly change their goods, while 36.0% reported slight changes, indicating a substantial shift in trade practices. Moreover, the border closure has led to significant price increases in the informal economy, with 42.0% observing a significant increase and 36.0% noting a general increase in prices.

#### 4.1.3 Response to Research Questions Three (3)

**Table 3: The socio-economic consequences of the prolonged border closure on the welfare of households in Kamba Town**

Questionnaire Question	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
7. How has the border closure impacted your household's ability to afford basic necessities?	a. Significantly negative	215	43
	b. Negatively	114	22.8
	c. No change	98	19.6
	d. Positively	73	14.6
	<i>TOTAL</i>	500	100
8. Has the border closure affected your household's spending patterns?	a. Significant decrease in spending	182	36.4
	b. Decrease in spending	123	24.6
	c. No change	142	28.4
	d. Increase in spending	53	10.6
	<i>TOTAL</i>	500	100
9. How has the border closure impacted the overall welfare of your household?	a. Significantly negatively	253	50.6
	b. Negatively	128	25.6
	c. No change	96	19.2
	d. Positively	23	4.6
	<i>TOTAL</i>	500	100

Table 3 provides insights into the socio-economic consequences of the prolonged border closure on households in Kamba Town. A significant portion of respondents (43%) reported that the border closure has had a significantly negative impact on their ability to afford basic necessities, with an additional 22.8% experiencing a general negative impact. Regarding household spending patterns, 36.4% indicated a significant decrease in spending, while 24.6% reported a decrease and 28.4% saw no change. Overall, half of the respondents (50.6%) stated that the border closure has significantly negatively affected their household welfare and another 25.6% experienced negative impacts.

**Table 5: Test of Hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ): The border closure has not significantly reduced the household incomes of residents in Kamba Town**

Question	Category	Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	(O - E)	(O - E) <sup>2</sup>	(O - E) <sup>2</sup> / E
How has your household income changed since the border closure?	Significant decrease	208	125	83	6889	55.112
	Decrease	156	125	31	961	7.688
	No change	85	125	-40	1600	12.8
	Increase	51	125	-74	5476	43.808
	<i>Total</i>	500	500			119.408

The research hypothesis was tested using the chi-square statistics in table 5 above. The total chi-square statistic is *119.408*, which is significantly higher than the critical value of 7.815 for 3 degrees of freedom at a 0.05 significance level. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant reduction in household incomes due to the border closure.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

From the obtained result, the border closure significantly impacted economic activities in Kamba Town, with 52% of residents reporting a negative effect on their businesses. Additionally, employment status was affected, with 24% losing their jobs and 54% experiencing reduced hours. Household income also saw notable decreases, with 35.6% reporting a significant drop and 40% experiencing a decrease. The study also revealed a profound impact of the border closure on the informal economy in Kamba Town. Almost half of the respondents (46.0%) reported that their informal trade activities were severely negatively affected, with an additional 30.0% experiencing negative impacts. Regarding changes in the types of goods traded, 40.0% of respondents had to significantly change their goods, while 36.0% reported slight changes, indicating a substantial shift in trade practices. Moreover, the border closure has led to significant price increases in the informal economy, with 42.0% observing a significant increase and 36.0% noting a general increase in prices. There was also socio-economic consequences of the prolonged border closure on households in Kamba Town. A significant portion of respondents (43%) reported that the border closure has had a significantly negative impact on their ability to afford basic necessities, with an additional 22.8% experiencing a general negative impact. Regarding household spending patterns, 36.4% indicated a significant decrease in spending, while 24.6% reported a decrease, and 28.4% saw no change. Overall, half of the respondents (50.6%) stated that the border closure has significantly negatively affected their household welfare, and another 25.6% experienced negative impacts. The research hypothesis was tested using the chi-square, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating a significant reduction in household incomes due to the border closure. In conclusion, the border closure has had a markedly detrimental impact on both the formal and informal economies in Kamba Town, leading to significant disruptions in business activities, employment, and household incomes. The resulting economic strain has further exacerbated the ability of households to afford basic necessities and maintain their overall welfare. To mitigate these adverse effects, it is recommended that the government consider alternative measures that can address the underlying issues of smuggling and security without resorting to prolonged border closures. Implementing policies that support local businesses, provide financial assistance to affected households and promote economic diversification can help alleviate the economic burdens faced by border communities. Additionally, enhancing cross-border cooperation and trade agreements with neighboring countries could foster a more stable and prosperous economic environment for these communities.

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