



# Contextual Connectivity and Implementation of Intra-National Economic Regionalism Policies: A Case of Lake Region Economic Bloc Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of intra-national economic regionalism policies, with a focus on the Lake Region Economic Bloc in Kenya. The population of the study was 634, and comprised of 24 members of the Lake Basin Development Authority, 440 Members of County Assembly, 27 Economic experts, 130 County Executive Committee Members and 13 members of the Council of Governors. A sample of 245 was obtained using proportionate stratified sampling. Interview schedules and semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Means, percentages and standard deviations were used for descriptive analysis while correlation and regression analysis were used for inferential analysis. Analysis of the qualitative data was based on the trends, themes and patterns that emerged from the qualitative responses. The result of the correlation analysis,  $r(157)=0.735$ ,  $p=000$  indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between contextual connectivity and implementation of the intra-national economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The regression results,  $\beta=0.631$ ,  $p<0.05$  similarly indicated that contextual connectivity significantly predicts implementation economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The study, therefore, concluded that contextual connectivity significantly influences implementation of economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The analyses provided significant empirical findings on the role of specificity on implementation of intra-national economic regionalism policies. Moreover, the study recommends that the bloc should promote continuous learning, flexibility and innovative evidence-drawing to facilitate local-based implementation of the intra-national economic regionalism policies. Decision makers must ensure self-organization, adjustment mechanisms and promotion of variation in the policy processes in the Economic Bloc. Generally, this study recommends that the county governments that are members of Lake Region Economic Bloc to develop agile policies to will make it easier to implement economic regionalism efficiently in the entire Bloc.

**Keywords:** Contextual Connectivity, Economic Bloc, Intra-national Economic Regionalism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Contextual connectivity is a solution to the policy problems in the complex stimuli of change (Swanson & Bhadwal, 2008). Based on the changes that occur at the specific contexts, connectivity with such changes is vital for the implementation of economic regionalism policies. The study by Walker, Rahman & Cave (2001) on “adaptive policies, policy analysis and policy making” revealed that policies should be adaptable to the comingled contexts in order to be effectively implemented. According to Scartascini, Stein & Tommasi (2008), contextual connectivity greatly improves the ability of policies to cope with the dynamics and risks of the implementation processes.

The study by Capano & Woo (2017) noted that decision makers face uncertainties resulting from inter-joined contexts, hence the need for contextual connectivity to address the ever changing and uncertain development conditions. According to Roy & Zubrycki, (2013) policies that are based on static analysis fail to explore possible vulnerabilities and eventually fail to achieve the intended outcomes. For this reason, in the context of economic regionalism, policy makers must anticipate an array of contextual conditions that lie ahead through a robust up-front design before the policies are implemented. In addition, the study by Smit & Wandel (2006) indicated that for successful contextual connectivity, adequate information from practitioners, decision-makers as well as analysts must be integrated into the policy processes to identify potential future exposures, sensitivities and adaptive capacity. Delimiting contextual connectivity strengthens the ability of policies to respond to the emerging complexities.

In South Korea, Choi & Lim (2017) examined the role of contextual factors in performance of manufacturing firms for regional economic development. Data obtained from a sample of 212 firms was analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling. The study outcomes revealed that local skills, government policies and technology acquisition are important contextual determinants that must be considered to increase the performance of manufacturing firms for regional economic development. According to Tewodros (2016), policy effectiveness should be analysed in light of their

connectivity with such contextual factors. The study by Paez (2004) on the “spatial economic activity in Eastern Asia” further found that contextual factors are necessary to be considered in the economic integration through effective links and accessibility.

In the European Union, Angresano (2004) investigated the importance of contextual consideration for economic integration. The study found that working rules and their corresponding institutions evolve in their particular settings. According to the study, contextual factors are shaped by philosophical bias, attitudes of the authorities towards the alternative economic institutions, political structures and the rules used for establishing the economic institutions. Novejarque, Pisá & López-Muñoz (2021) assessed the role of contextual conditions in entrepreneurship of the Spain's economic regions. The study obtained institutional data between 2000 and 2017. The results found that that linking contextual factors such as economic growth establishment with the determination of the investment on new firms within the economic levels.

In Central America, Mack & Putzschel (2014) investigated the role of contextual determinants on the processes of entrepreneurship. The study found that it is necessary to connect the different contextual factors (such as economic factors, political factors and legal factors) that have different influence on commercial and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. Moreover, while focusing on both developed and developing countries, Reda *et al.* (2020) found that identification of contextual factors is critical for effective policy implementation. Analysis of the contextual factors provides effective response to the major opportunities as well as challenges facing policies.

In Nigeria, Oføgbu, Akanbi & Joseph (2013) investigated the role of contextual factors in performance of economic enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The study sampled 140 respondents. The descriptive and inferential results revealed that contextual factors affecting the enterprises have a huge role in the development of the economy of the Kwara State. The study found that contextual factors such as an enabling environment, availability of raw materials and markets have an influence on the performance of enterprises, and hence the development of regional economies. In Ghana, Koduah, Van Dijk & Agyepong (2015) examined the role that contextual elements play in agenda setting and policy formulation. The study established that contextual factors act in interrelation manner and shape how policy actors act in line with the policy content and the intended agenda. The study suggested the need for development of policies that provide contextual reinforcement roles in fostering growth of the regional economies. In Kenya, the study by Muganga (2004) recommended designing of regional economic policies that better balances contextual factors with the industry in order to facilitate economic growth. Ndung'u (2014) in a study of “devolution and economic potentialities in Kenya” and a desktop review by Bunde (2023) found that connecting policies with local context allows consolidation and matching of resources with the local preferences.

Related empirical studies similarly revealed a significant link between contextual connectivity and policy implementation. In a cross-national study of 76 countries, Scartascini, Stein & Tommasi (2013) found that through the principle of contextual connectivity, policy implementers are able to restructure, adapt and reinstitute the internal processes, attitudes and behaviors in response to external demands. In another cross-sectional study in Ireland, Smit (2015) analysed data from 404 respondents and the regression findings revealed that learning, creating change and creativity generate new ideas for contextual connectivity. In Singapore, a cross-national the study by Pheng, Shang & Ken (2015) using a sample of 46 firms found that contextual connectivity accounts for continued service delivery and performance at the organizational level. In Brazil, a study of 160 company employees by Kaehler *et al.* (2014) revealed that contextual connectivity enables organizations to create change, learn and be creative to generate new ideas and subsequently implement them effectively for a sustainable policy management. In Canada, Bizikova *et al.* (2018), employed Adaptive Design and Assessment Policy Tool to study policy adaptability in the context of change of climate. The study found that adapting policies to the specific contexts allows cooperative equilibriums to the policymaking complexities.

The existing empirical findings have revealed that contextual connectivity enhances implementation of policies. According to Olsson, Forke & Berkes (2004), contextual connectivity specifies policies from the perspective of responsiveness, to the anticipated and unanticipated realities of the implementation processes. Scartascini, Stein & Tommasi (2008) further assert that through contextual connectivity, policies can be adjusted when they fail and when the circumstances change. According to the study by Glass & Newig (2019), identifying contextual processes that can carry policies forward for effective implementation ensures that the policies maintain the priorities, coordination, resources, capability and stability for the policies to have the resilience that lead to a responsive, predictable and adaptive contextual-based implementation. By providing an integrated and forward-looking policy analysis, both planned and autonomous contextual connectivity in the context of economic regionalism can enable the implementation systems to be flexible and have a better capacity for self-correction. However, this can only be achieved by shared commitments, common values and a comprehensive understanding of the economic regionalism policy causal relationships, as revealed by Scartascini, Stein & Tommasi (2013).

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## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Empirical evidence on the role of contextual connectivity on implementation of intra-national economic regionalism in Kenya is lacking in the current studies. This study therefore sought to investigate the role of contextual connectivity on implementation of economic regionalism, with a focus on the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The study aimed to compare its findings with the findings of the other related studies that have investigated the relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of economic regionalism policies, both at intra-national and cross-boundary levels.

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## III. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was utilized by this study. From the sample of 245 individuals, data was obtained from 157 respondents. This translated to 64.1% response rate. Interview schedules and semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Means, percentages

and standard deviations were used for descriptive analysis while correlation and regression analysis were used for inferential analysis. Analysis of the qualitative data was based on the trends, themes and patterns that emerged from the qualitative responses.

#### IV. RESULTS

##### A. Response Rate

Table 1: Response Rate

Questionnaires	Number	Response Rate
Total questionnaires delivered	245	64.1%
Questionnaires returned for analysis	157	

The response rate was 80.3%. This response rate was adequate for data analysis because it was above the recommended minimum rate of 50% (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

##### B. Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

Table 2: Instrument Reliability

Item	Cronbach's alpha	Comment
Economic Regionalism	0.872	Reliable
Contextual Connectivity	0.947	Reliable

The reliability of Economic Regionalism ( $\alpha = 0.872$ ) and Contextual Connectivity ( $\alpha = 0.947$ ) were found to be above the recommended minimum value of 0.7. Hence, the study proceeded to the analysis of the collected data.

##### C. Respondents' Characteristics

Table 3: Respondents' Characteristics

Category	Percentage	Frequency
Gender: Female	12.7	20
Male	87.3	137
Age: 34 and below years	18.5	29
35-to-44 years	42.7	67
45-to-49 years	24.2	38
50 years and above	14.6	23
Education level: Certificate	1.9	3
Diploma	17.8	28
Bachelor's degree	64.9	102
Master's degree	12.1	19
PhD	3.2	5
Experience: Below 1 year	3.2	5
1-to-5 years	44.6	70
6-to-10 years	39.5	62
Over 10 years	12.7	20

The respondents' characteristics showed that 12.7% ( $n=20$ ) were females and 87.3% ( $n=137$ ) were males. 18.5% ( $n=29$ ) of the respondents were 34 years and below; 42.7% ( $n=67$ ) were between 35-to-44 years; 24.2% ( $n=38$ ) were between 45-to-49 years while 14.6% ( $n=23$ ) of the respondents were found to be 50 years and above. In terms of academic qualification, 1.9% ( $n=3$ ) of the respondents indicated that they have certificate qualification; 17.8% ( $n=28$ )

had diploma qualification; 64.9%( $n=102$ ) noted that they have a bachelor's degree; 12.1%( $n=19$ ) had master's degree while 3.2%( $n=5$ ) indicated that they have doctoral qualifications. The respondents further indicated that 3.2%( $n=5$ ) had worked for less than a year; 44.4%( $n=70$ ) indicated that they had worked for 1-to-5 years; 39.5%( $n=62$ ) had worked for 6-to-10 years while 12.7%( $n=20$ ) had worked for more than 10 years.

#### D. Descriptive analysis of Contextual Connectivity

The distribution of scores in the descriptive quantitative analysis of contextual connectivity was done using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations for each of the ten items. The study also analysed qualitative responses that were collected from the informants using illustrative quotes. The scores were presented in Table 4, as shown below.

**Table 4: Descriptive Results for Contextual Connectivity**

Item	Statement	M	SD	N
Item1	Economic regionalism policies are adaptable to the use of new tools and techniques in implementation.	3.044	1.076	157
Item2	Economic regionalism policies effectively deal with complexities that could otherwise affect their implementation.	3.312	1.018	157
Item3	Economic regionalism policies provide innovative learning and agility to the changing implementation circumstances.	3.439	1.162	157
Item4	Economic regionalism policies provide responsive reviews for increased connectivity with the uncertainties.	3.070	1.019	157
Item5	Economic regionalism policies allow self-organization among the stakeholders.	2.866	1.104	157
Item6	Economic regionalism policies encourage integral and forward looking change analyses.	3.280	1.114	157
Item7	Economic regionalism policies provide adequate policy instruments for evidence-drawing.	3.758	1.123	157
Item8	Economic regionalism policies allow new implementation partners and working styles.	3.299	1.076	157
Item9	Economic regionalism policies facilitate information sharing for increased transformability.	2.299	1.179	157
Item10	Economic regionalism policies ensure there are automated policy adjustments.	2.961	1.012	157
Grand Mean		3.138		

The descriptive results in Table 4 indicated that the economic regionalism policies are adaptable to the changing contexts in the Lake Region Economic Bloc, as revealed by a mean of ( $M=3.044$ ,  $SD=1.076$ ). The finding was confirmed by 34.4%( $n=54$ ) of the respondents who agreed that economic regionalism policies are adaptable to the use of new tools and techniques in implementation to a moderate extent and 26.8%( $n=42$ ) who indicated that economic regionalism policies are adaptable to the use of new tools and techniques in implementation to a large extent. Adaptability allows policies to absorb disturbances leading to their success. Similarly, the key respondent *R29* revealed that

“.....I do know that local factors are keenly taken care of to some extent in order to fulfil the aim of the Bloc. The policies developed ensure that the needs of the various local regions and people are adapted with the overall objective of the bloc. This is seen in the agricultural sector. Some regions are tea producers; some are fish producers while others focus on trade, especially the urban centres and towns. Therefore these different characteristics necessitate the need to ensure that each region is addressed with the uniqueness it requires. We hope to move forward with the same context-based strategy for developing the Lake Region Economic Bloc....”

The mean for dealing with complexities ( $M=3.312$ ,  $SD=1.018$ ) revealed that the complexities in the Lake Region Economic Bloc do not severely distract the economic regionalism policies. According to 12.1%( $n=19$ ) of the respondents, the economic regionalism policies address the complexities to a very large extent. Similarly, 32.5%( $n=51$ ) and 33.1%( $n=52$ ) noted that the policies address the complexities to large and moderate extent respectively. The study by Echeverria *et al.*, (2013) and Roy & Zubrycki, (2013) noted that connecting policies with the time-urgent complexities positively shapes the future of the implementation of policies. Novejarque, Pisá & López-Muñoz (2021) noted that contextual factors like human capital, economic growth determine the effect of development investment on firms within the economic levels.

The mean for learning ( $M=3.439$ ,  $SD=1.162$ ) showed that innovative learning and agility promotes economic regionalism in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. Majority of the respondents, 29.9%( $n=47$ ) highlighted that economic regionalism policies provide innovative learning and agility to the changing implementation circumstances to a large extent. Only a small number 5.7%( $n=9$ ) opined that economic regionalism policies do not provide innovative learning and agility to the changing implementation circumstances. Past studies have found that learning and agility exposes policies to best practices

that are fundamental for policy implementation. Angresano (2004) found that based on the changes that occur at the specific contexts of policy implementation, agility to such changes is vital for the implementation of economic regionalism policies.

The study further showed that responsive reviews increases connectivity, promoting economic regionalism in Lake Region Economic Bloc ( $M=3.070$ ,  $SD=1.019$ ). This was confirmed by 29.3% ( $n=46$ ) and 6.4% ( $n=10$ ) who agreed that economic regionalism policies provide responsive reviews for increased connectivity with the uncertainties to a large extent and very large extent respectively. Moreover, 36.3% ( $n=57$ ) noted that economic regionalism policies provide responsive reviews for increased connectivity with the uncertainties to a moderate extent. This finding is in agreement with Roy & Zubrycki, (2013) who noted that policy reviews are necessary to test the performance and trigger adjustments in the development process. This allows the policy agents to take advantage of emerging opportunities for the intended development outcomes.

The study, however, revealed that uniqueness of the developmental needs of each county is an existing challenge to contextual connectivity of the economic regionalism policies. The uniqueness has raised the need to ensure that all the policies are more effective in terms of connecting to complexities, local needs and encouraging investment diversification through new working resources within the Lake Region economic Bloc. The key respondents supported a greater analysis of each county's development challenges as strategy for enhancing contextual connectivity of the economic regionalism policies in Lake Region Economic Bloc. The respondent *R162* reported that

"...each County in the Lake Region Economic Bloc has a unique development challenges and opportunities. Specialization in the economic activities by the counties is varied. For example, counties such as Nandi, Kericho, Nyamira and Kisii are involved in tea production while Counties such as Migori, Bungoma and Kisumu are involved in sugarcane farming. These diversified economic activities should act a source of strength for the bloc, but unfortunately, at the moment, they actually act as a challenge to economic integration of the counties within the bloc. This is a problem that needs to be reviewed, right from the level of every county....."

On self-organization of the stakeholders, the low mean ( $M=2.866$ ,  $SD=1.104$ ) indicated that the economic regionalism policies are not very effective in terms of self-organization. A large number of the respondents, 13.4% ( $n=21$ ) indicated that the policies do not allow self-organization. 22.9% ( $n=36$ ) of the respondents reported that economic regionalism policies allow self-organization among the stakeholders to a small extent while 32.5% ( $n=51$ ) of the respondents indicated that economic regionalism policies allow self-organization among the stakeholders to a moderate extent. This is finding is worrying because ineffective self-organization can weaken the ability of the policies to respond to the emerging complexities. The study by Butler & Allen (2008) similarly established that self-organization is a useful for the stakeholders to navigate through the unexpected changes in the policy making process.

However, analysis of the qualitative data revealed that 58% ( $n=91$ ) of the respondents agreed that the bloc utilizes contextual connectivity reviews very often, 29.9% ( $n=47$ ) noted that the contextual connectivity reviews are rarely utilized while 12.1% ( $n=19$ ) noted that contextual connectivity reviews are not utilized at all in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. These figures indicate that contextual connectivity reviews are utilized, but not effectively, to boost implementation of economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The key respondents further revealed the importance of narrowing goals to match the local needs. The respondent, *R129* highlighted that

"...matching the general objectives of the Lake Region Economic Bloc with the developmental needs at the local levels will go far in ensuring effective implementation of the bloc's economic goals. This will then require assessment of the local needs, especially in the agricultural sector because this region is predominantly an agricultural region. By doing so, the bloc will be able to narrow its goals to be able to address the diversified local challenges in the counties<sup>7</sup>. Utilization of the local reports is necessary to achieve this objective within this economic Bloc..."

The mean for change analyses ( $M=3.280$ ,  $SD=1.114$ ) showed that change analyses enhance implementation of economic regionalism in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. However, the high standard deviation shows that a large number of the respondents had large variations in the views regarding the change analyses for implementation of economic regionalism in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. 30.6% ( $n=48$ ) of the respondents showed that economic regionalism policies encourage integral and forward looking change analyses to a large extent and 14.0% ( $n=22$ ) of the respondents showed that economic regionalism policies encourage integral and forward looking change analyses to a very large extent. 31.8% ( $n=50$ ) of the respondents showed that economic regionalism policies encourage integral and forward looking change analyses to a moderate extent. 16.6% ( $n=26$ ) and 7.0% ( $n=11$ ) of the respondents noted a small and zero extent respectively. Nonetheless, the finding agrees with the study by Glass & Newig (2019) which established that change analyses ensure that the policies maintain the capability, coordination, priorities required for implementation of policies.

On evidence-drawing, the mean ( $M=3.758$ ,  $SD=1.123$ ) indicated that evidence-drawing promotes adoption of economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. According to 34.4% ( $n=54$ ) and 29.9% ( $n=47$ ) of the respondents, economic regionalism policies provide adequate policy instruments for evidence-drawing to a large extent and very large extent respectively. Only 8.3% ( $n=13$ ) and 5.1% ( $n=8$ ) of the respondents indicated that economic regionalism policies provide adequate policy instruments for evidence-drawing to a large extent and a moderate extent respectively. The finding is supported by Choi & Lim (2017) who noted that evidence-drawing on important contextual determinants such as local skills, government policies and technology acquisition can increase performance of the implementation of policies. The study by Bullock (2021) similarly found that problems of implementation of policies can be greatly reduced by integrating evidence analysis in the implementation process.

The study also found that the working styles within the Lake Region Economic Bloc facilitate adoption of economic regionalism ( $M=3.299$ ,  $SD=1.076$ ). 33.1% ( $n=52$ ) indicated that economic regionalism policies allow new implementation partners and working styles to a large extent while 12.7% ( $n=20$ ) indicated that economic regionalism policies allow new implementation partners and working styles to a very large extent. Moreover, 31.2% ( $n=49$ ) and 17.2% ( $n=27$ ) indicated that economic regionalism policies allow new implementation partners and working styles to a moderate and small extent

respectively. According to Walker, Rahman & Cave (2001), establishing cooperative equilibrium and configuring working styles increase capability for learning while permitting efficient implementation. Effective working styles can facilitate better utilization of resources for the implementation of the economic regionalism policies. A study by Tosun & Treib (2018) on “linking policy design and the implementation styles” also indicated that success of policies depends on the working styles linked to them.

The mean for information sharing ( $M=2.299$ ,  $SD=1.179$ ) revealed that the economic regionalism policies do not effectively facilitate information sharing in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The mean was confirmed by 34.4% ( $n=54$ ) of the respondents who reported that economic regionalism policies facilitate information sharing for increased transformability to a small extent while 19.7% ( $n=31$ ) indicated that economic regionalism policies facilitate information sharing for increased transformability to a moderate extent. On the other hand, 10.2% ( $n=16$ ) agreed that economic regionalism policies facilitate information sharing for increased transformability to a large extent and 6.4% ( $n=10$ ) indicated that economic regionalism policies facilitate information sharing for increased transformability to a very large extent. According to the study by Smit & Wandel (2006), adequate information from practitioners and decision-makers must be included in the policy process to increase future adaptive capacity of the policies.

On automated policy adjustments, the study revealed that the economic regionalism policies have moderately effective adjustment mechanisms that promote economic regionalism in the Lake Region Economic Bloc ( $M=2.961$ ,  $SD=1.012$ ). Majority of the respondents, 25.5% ( $n=60$ ) highlighted that economic regionalism policies ensure there are automated policy adjustments to a moderate extent and 38.2% ( $n=60$ ) agreed that economic regionalism policies ensure there are automated policy adjustments to a small extent. On the other hand, only a small number 5.1% ( $n=8$ ) reported that policy adjustments are given considerations to a very large extent. This finding revealed the need for the policy makers in the Lake Region Economic Bloc to anticipate an array of conditions that lie ahead before the economic regionalism policies reach implementation level. Moreover, for better policy adjustment, some of the key respondents showed the importance of connecting the contextual factors with the overall goals of policy implementation in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The respondent *R101*, reported that

“.....what I can say is that connecting the main policies with the specific needs of the local conditions will go a long way in enhancing implementation of the objectives of the Lake Region Economic Bloc. So far, we are seeing positive steps toward ensuring that contextual connectivity is considered in the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies in the economic bloc. However due to the many variations of the local conditions, the current policies cannot solve all the economic conditions that need to be addressed. Therefore, a lot of improvements are necessary to fully realize the general long-term objective of the Bloc.....”

The aggregate mean for contextual connectivity ( $M=3.138$ ,  $SD=1.088$ ) indicated that in general, contextual connectivity strategies promote economic regionalism in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The findings support the results of Paez (2004) who found that contextual factors are necessary to be considered in the economic integration through effective links and accessibility. Novejarque, Pisá & López-Muñoz (2021) assessed the role of contextual conditions in entrepreneurship of the Spain's economic regions. The study obtained institutional data between 2000 and 2017. The results suggested that contextual conditions such as human capital, economic growth and the size of establishment determine the impact of investment development on new firms within the economic levels. Ndung'u (2014) in a study of devolution and economic potentialities in Kenya, noted that connecting policies with local context allows consolidation of local resources and matching budgets to the local preferences. Similarly, Ofoegbu, Akanbi & Joseph (2013) found that contextual factors such as enabling environment, availability of raw materials and markets have an influence on the performance of enterprises, and hence the development of regional economies. Olsson, Forke & Berkes (2004) also noted that contextual connectivity specifies policies from the perspective of responsiveness, to the anticipated and unanticipated realities of implementation processes.

#### ***E. Bivariate Interaction between Contextual Connectivity and Economic Regionalism***

Normality, homogeneity and linearity assumptions were tested for contextual connectivity before bivariate correlation and regression analyses were conducted for the direct relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The normality of contextual connectivity was tested using skewness and kurtosis. The study found that both the skewness and kurtosis were between -1 and +1. The skewness statistic of -0.157 and kurtosis statistic of -0.703 shown in Table 5 indicated that the distribution of the data of contextual connectivity was not too skewed or too kurtotic and could be used for further analysis of relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc.

**Table 5: Normality test for contextual connectivity**

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Contextual Connectivity	157	-.157	.194	-.703	.385
Valid N (listwise)	157				

Homogeneity of contextual connectivity and economic regionalism was tested using the Levene's test of Equality of Error Variances. The result indicated a statistically non-significant value of  $F(20,126)= 1.594$ ,  $p>0.05$ . According to Hayes & Cai (2007), the  $p$ -values that are more than 0.05 indicate that the variances are not significantly different, and the assumption of homogeneity is met.

**Table 6: Homogeneity test for contextual connectivity**

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.594	20	126	.064

Linearity between contextual connectivity and economic regionalism was tested using ANOVA. The significant value of deviation from linearity was  $F(29,129)=0.814$ ,  $\rho>0.05$ , indicating a linear relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of economic regionalism policies. Tabachnick & Fidell (2001) established that the assumption of linearity is met when the significant value is ( $\rho>0.05$ ).

**Table 7: Linearity between contextual connectivity and economic regionalism**

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Economic Regionalism * Contextual Connectivity	Between Groups	(Combined)	62.286	30	2.076	6.662	.000
		Linearity	54.928	1	54.928	176.245	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	7.358	29	.254	.814	.735
	Within Groups		39.269	126	.312		
Total			101.555	156			

The bivariate correlation result in Table 4.25,  $r(157)=0.735$ ,  $\rho<0.05$ , showed a strong positive linear relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of economic regionalism policies. The correlation finding is similar to the results of the study by Paez (2004) that found that contextual factors are necessary to be considered in the economic integration through effective links and accessibility.

**Table 8: Correlation between contextual connectivity and economic regionalism**

		Economic Regionalism	Contextual Connectivity
Contextual Connectivity	Pearson Correlation	.735**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	157	157

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

The bivariate regression model summary indicated the goodness of fit for the regression of contextual connectivity on implementation of economic regionalism, as shown in Table 9. The value of R square ( $R^2=0.541$ ) indicated that 54.1% of the variation in implementation of economic regionalism policies is explained by contextual connectivity. Therefore 45.9% of the variation in economic regionalism is explained and accounted for by other factors, including specificity orientation, participatory scoping and distributed synchronization. The ANOVA results of  $F(1,155)=182.594$ ,  $\rho<0.05$ , showed that contextual connectivity significantly explains variation in implementation of economic regionalism policies. The study by Koduah (2015) similarly established that contextual factors act in interrelation manner and shape how policy actors act in line with the policy content and the intended agenda. The beta coefficient,  $\beta=0.631$ ,  $\rho<0.05$ , was found to be positive and significant. The beta showed that a positive unit change in contextual connectivity leads to a 0.631 change in the implementation of economic regionalism policies. This result confirmed that contextual connectivity has a positive effect of implementation of the economic regionalism policies.

**Table 9: Bivariate Regression of Contextual Connectivity and Economic Regionalism****Model Summary for contextual connectivity**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.735 <sup>a</sup>	.541	.538	.54847

**ANOVA <sup>a</sup> for contextual connectivity**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	54.928	1	54.928	182.594	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	46.627	155	.301		
Total	101.555	156			

**Regression Coefficients <sup>a</sup> for contextual connectivity**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	1.031	.153		6.741	.000
Contextual Connectivity	.631	.047	.735	13.513	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Economic Regionalism

The bivariate regression model for direct relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc was found to be

$$\text{EcoRe} = 1.031 + 0.631\text{ConCo} + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

EconRe = Economic Regionalism; ConCo = Contextual Connectivity

Previous studies such as by Ofoegbu, Akanbi & Joseph (2013) also found that contextual factors such as an enabling environment, availability of raw materials and markets have an influence on the performance of enterprises, and hence the development of regional economies. Similarly, the study by Reda *et al* (2020) found that identification and connection with contextual factors is critical for effective policy implementation. Analysis of the contextual factors provides effective response to the major opportunities as well as challenges facing policies. In a cross-national study of 76 countries, Scartascini, Stein & Tommasi (2013) found that through the principle of contextual connectivity, policy implementers are able to restructure, adapt and reinstitute the internal processes, attitudes and behaviors in response to external demands.

In a cross-sectional study in Ireland, Smit (2015) analysed data from 404 respondents and the regression findings revealed that learning, creating change and creativity generate new ideas for contextual connectivity. In Singapore, a cross-national the study by Pheng, Shang & Ken (2015) using a sample of 46 firms found that contextual connectivity accounts for continued service delivery and performance at the organizational level. Moreover, the investigation by Koduah (2015) established that contextual factors act in interrelation manner and shape how policy actors act in line with the policy content and the intended agenda. In Brazil, a study of 160 company employees by Kaehler *et al.* (2014) revealed that contextual connectivity enables organizations to create change, learn and be creative to generate new ideas and subsequently implement them effectively for policy management.

According to the study by Glass & Newig (2019), identifying contextual processes that can carry policies forward for effective implementation ensures that the policies maintain the priorities, coordination, resources, capability and stability for the policies to have the resilience that lead to a responsive, predictable and adaptive contextual-based implementation. Scartascini, Stein & Tommasi (2008) established that contextual connectivity greatly improves the ability of policies to cope with the risks and dynamics of the implementation processes. According to Olsson, Forke & Berkes (2004), contextual connectivity specifies policies from the perspective of responsiveness, to the anticipated and unanticipated realities of the implementation.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study sought to establish the effect of contextual connectivity on implementation of intra-national economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc, Kenya. The aggregate quantitative descriptive results of contextual connectivity indicated that contextual connectivity strategies promote economic regionalism in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The descriptive results revealed that adaptability, innovative learning and the use of responsive reviews increases contextual connectivity which in turn promotes in implementation of intra-national economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc, Kenya. Moreover, the use of policy instruments for evidence-drawing and change analysis support implementation of intra-national economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The qualitative results identified that narrowing of goals is significant in addressing the diversified local challenges in the fourteen counties in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The correlation result, showed a strong positive linear relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of economic regionalism policies. Similarly, the results of the simple linear regression and multiple linear regression results showed that contextual connectivity has a positive effect of implementation of economic regionalism policies in the economic bloc. The study therefore concluded that there is significant effect of specificity orientation on the implementation of intra-national economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc, Kenya. The finding supported the previous studies that found a significant relationship between contextual connectivity and implementation of economic regionalism policies.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that various inter-joined contexts exist in the process of implementation of the intra-national economic regionalism policies in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. Therefore, the study recommends that the decision makers must ensure self-organization, adjustment mechanisms and promotion of variation in the policy processes in the Lake Region Economic Bloc. The study further recommends promotion of continuous learning, flexibility and innovative evidence-drawing to facilitate local-based implementation of the intra-national economic regionalism policies. Generally, this



study recommends that the county governments that are members of Lake Region Economic Bloc to develop agile policies to will make it easier to implement economic regionalism efficiently in the entire Economic Bloc.

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