Combating Smuggling of Consumer Goods across Nigeria-Benin Border:
Strategies and Challenges.
By

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ABSTRACT

This paper interrogated the strategies implemented by the government in combating the smuggling of consumer goods across the Benin-Nigeria border. Structural-functionalism theory is adopted in the paper. Functionalists view society as a social structure made up of parts. All the parts are expected to function together and interdependently and cohesively for the whole society by which equilibrium and peace can be maintained within the society. Functionalists argued that society fails to survive because certain essential tasks that should be performed by the government and its institutions were not done. The paper utilised a cross-sectional survey design and combined both primary and secondary methods of data collection. Purposive and simple random sampling was used to sample the target population. The Krenjice and Morgan (1970) sample size technique was adopted in determining the sample size of three hundred and sixty-three (363) respondents. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS 27 and presented in mean and standard deviation. Linear regression was used to test the hypotheses. The study established that although the Nigerian government has achieved measurable success in curbing the smuggling of goods, more needs to be done. Therefore, the paper recommends that the government should formulate stiffer anti-smuggling laws, enhance the capacity of Nigerian Customs by way of regular training, provision of adequate equipment, remuneration, application of Information Technological (IT) based border security using surveillance drones and Hi-Tech Closed Circuit Television Cameras and scanners. The government should adequately deal with economic factors that tend to promote smuggling such as high tariff regimes, and import bans. The government should overhaul Nigerian port operations to fast-track import processes. Intense and sustained inter-agency collaboration among various security agencies at the border must also be enhanced while stamping out corruption among security agencies that man Nigeria's borders.

Key Words: Smuggling, Contraband, Consumer Goods, Border.

Introduction

Recognising the prevalence and dangers of smuggling of consumer goods to the economy, the Nigerian government over the years implemented several strategies to stem the tide of smuggling activities across the Nigerian-Benin Border. Some of these measures according to Adetula(2014) include legislative measures, and bilateral Responses: security cooperation, border management & joint operations border closure, joint border patrols, intelligence sharing, inter-agency collaboration, arrest, detention and seizure of smuggled goods, bilateral collaboration among others. Omar (2023) highlighted other measures including border interdiction, collection of information and intelligence, investigations into criminal networks, deployment of anti-smuggling technologies, prosecution of individuals associated with professional smuggling rings, facilitation of training and education, and the fostering of cooperation between international customs agencies. Omar (2018) argued that the prevention of smuggling needs a wide range of actors including the government, both regional and local administrators, and the society at large. Public Enlightenment of the effects of smuggling on the economy of a given country plays a vast role in challenging the increasing smuggling activities as this is necessary to infuse into the hearts and minds of citizens the necessity for proper respect of traditional law and to let them stand against contraband (Karafo, 2018).

However, Karafo (2018), Oloma, Oladimeji, & Adewumi,(2018), Nosiri & Ohazurike (2016), GIABA (2020), Basu (2014) reiterated that security agencies are faced with major challenges militating against a successful fight against smuggling of goods which include; poor salary for controlling units; lack of competent and skilled manpower in control unit; lack of ongoing training on how to control contraband; insufficient checkpoints to control all cross border activities; lack of adequate modern technological instruments and infrastructure; insufficient checkpoints to control all cross border activities; corruption and coalition; complex geographical transportation; insufficient enforcement and penalties, and weak institutional capacity.

This paper attempts to examine the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by the Nigerian government in the fight against smuggling across the Benin-Nigeria border and the challenges encountered.

Statement of the Problem

Smuggling of consumer goods is a serious concern in Nigeria as it hurts capital-scarce economies. It reduces government revenues, influences unemployment, loss of tax revenues for funding public expenditure on health, education and public infrastructure. it also strangulates micro small and medium business enterprises' growth shutting their market by providing forbidden and quality products produced with advanced technologies at a low price(FICCI, 2016). As a result, several strategies have been implemented at the national and regional levels towards addressing the issues related to border security problems. Yet there is a growing number of concerns about how the Nigerian-Benein border will be managed effectively. Thus, it is against the problems stated above that this paper tries to investigate the strategies implemented to curb the menace in a bid to advance alternative measures to mitigate illicit trade across the Benin-Nigeria border.

Research Questions

This paper will address the following research questions:

i.   What are the strategies implemented to mitigate smuggling of goods across the Nigeria-Benin Border and how effective were they?

ii.   What are the challenges being faced by the Nigerian Customs and other stakeholders in combating the smuggling of consumer goods across the Benin -Nigeria border?

Objectives of the study

The core objective of this paper was to examine the strategies implemented in combating the smuggling of consumer goods across the Nigeria -Benin border. Other specific objectives include:

i.   To assess the effectiveness of the strategies implemented to curb the smuggling of goods across the Nigeria-Benin border.

ii.   To examine the challenges being faced by the Nigerian Customs and other stakeholders in combating the smuggling of consumer goods across the Benin -Nigeria border.

Hypotheses

H01.   There is no significant relationship between the strategies implemented to mitigate the smuggling of contraband consumer goods and the reduction of smuggling activities across Benin-Border.

H02   There is no significant relationship between challenges faced by Nigerian Customs in   the fight against the smuggling of contraband consumer goods and the increase in smuggling activities across the Benin -Nigeria border.

Conceptual Framework

Smuggling

Smuggling is the illegal movement of goods into or out of a country or trading region often to circumvent tariffs or legal duty. it is "any practice or conduct prohibited by law and which relates to production, shipment, receipt, possession, distribution, sale or purchase including any practice or conduct intended to facilitate such activity" (WHO, 2003). Deflem and Kelly (2001) described it as a clandestine activity which involves the importation and/or exportation of goods by wrong or unlawful means with the objective of evading taxes and any other measures prohibiting or restricting the importation or exportation of such goods. This study adopted the definition put forward by the Nigeria Customs and Excise Management Act (1969), which describes smuggling as "the false importation, declaration and concealment of goods, wilful under-payment of Customs duties, trafficking in prohibited or restricted goods, use of unapproved routes and ports, forging of Customs documents and touting in Customs goods and documents.

Contraband

The word contraband refers to property that is illegal to possess or transport and may be goods that are illegal to import or export and are attempted to be smuggled into a country. The products have no official entry point and, as such, do not have customs documents or prior approval to enter into or depart from a country. They violate the law that governs the import /export procedure and thus avoid the payment of all applicable taxes for the importation or exportation of goods and hurt the socioeconomic development of a country (CAMA Act, 2004).

Consumer Goods

Consumer goods according to Grabner-Krautre (2018) refer to the ultimate user of products, ideas, and services. Consumer goods (CG) refer to essential and non-essential items purchased by the consumer at frequent intervals such as soap, detergents, cosmetics, and other toiletries which have swift turnover and relatively low cost. Adebayo (2017) posited that consumer goods are a generalized term for any product or service purchased primarily for personal, family, or household uses. They are goods,

which are directly consumed or used by the buyers without any commercial processing. Consumer goods are products bought for consumption by the average consumer. Alternatively called final goods, consumer goods are the result of production and manufacturing clothing, food, and jewellery are all examples of consumer goods. Basic or raw materials, such as copper, are not considered consumer goods because they must be transformed into usable products.

Border

A border is a separation between States but also a process of control on behalf of their national security. Eselebor (2008) noted that a border is a line or thin strip delimiting the territories of sovereign States with equal jurisdiction as can be observed at the Nigeria border with the Benin Republic at Seme. The essence of a border is to separate the "self" from the "other" as such, one of the major functions of a border is to act as a barrier, "protecting" the "us insiders" from the "them outsiders" (Sibley 2017). They prevent the entry of undesired elements be they people, goods, arms, or drugs. The barrier function of borders also protects those inside from other "harmful" elements, such as drugs, migrant labour, competition in the market place and so on.

Asiwaju (2003) noted that borderlands in Africa have similar characteristics to those in other continents. They are transition zones in which all types of social, economic and political interaction take place. They can be a source of dispute, and they can also serve as a bridge for cooperation among nation-states. This implies that whether originally, arbitrary or not, and intra-ethnically or politically divisive or not, African borders are often now accepted, even actively reproduced ground of social and economic life for borderlands. Borders are to produce social relations, collective memories and collective identities, where identities are represented in terms of a difference between one side and the other. In other words, there is the presupposition that border construction involves symbolic codes of distinction between one side and the other.

In addition to being a hub of economic activities, the Benin- Nigeria border has also been a conduit for criminal activities including smuggling of consumer goods. Golub (2008) attributes the development to the inability of governments to effectively prevent unofficial crossings along long borders with few human or natural barriers, making evasion relatively easy.

Empirical Review

Strategies in Combating Smuggling of Goods

Adetula (2015) examined Nigeria's response to transnational organised crime and Jihadist activities in West Africa. He observed that the government had implemented several strategies including Legislative measures; including Anti Terrorism Act, Anti-Piracy Act, Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing (Prohibition) Act, etc., Law enforcement measures involving efforts to improve the customs and immigration services about transnational organized crime, installation of detection equipment at airports and seaports, internal security and policing and Bilateral Responses: Security Cooperation, Border Management & Joint. For instance, in 1979 Nigeria and Benin concluded an agreement providing for joint border patrols and also for Beninese to attend Nigerian military training institutions.

Ismail & Rabi (2022) examined strategies, challenges and options for tackling cross-border crimes around the Nigerian-Cameroon Borders. The study adopts contents analysis for this research and adopts the State Fragility theory pounded by Joel Migdal. The study found that border crimes such as narcotics/drug trafficking, internet crime (advance fee fraud/money laundering), human trafficking, firearms trafficking, recruitment of child soldiers, mercenaries, smuggling of illegal goods, minerals and natural resources and cash crops among others are rampant across this borders. The paper submits that there is a need for strategies such as improved manpower, enlightenment of the border security, technological improvement, legislative and regulatory action, adequate investigative and enforcement techniques, and inter-agency collaboration to effectively respond to challenges of border security at the Nigerian-Cameroonian Borders.

Omale (2018) examined the crime of smuggling in Nigeria with particular emphasis on the role of the principal agency in charge of the administration and combating of the crime. It examines the nature of smuggling offences under the Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) and finds that the role of the NCS in this regard and as stipulated in the CEMA cannot be overemphasized. Under the guise of collaboration, other agencies engage in this statutory role of the NCS, which ought not to be.

Challenges faced in combating Smuggling of Consumer Goods

Nosiri & Ohazurike (2016) investigated border security and national security in Nigeria using secondary data. Findings revealed that corruption; poor application of technological gadgets by security agencies, porous nature of the borders etc were some of the challenges to effective border security in Nigeria.

Oloma, Oladimeji, & Adewumi,(2018) examined border security issues and Challenges of the Nigeria Customs Service using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A total of one hundred and seventy-eight (178) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to officers in the Head of Customs Intelligence Unit, Nigerian Army, Nigeria Police, Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Immigration Service, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control and Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON). They found that the major challenges militating against maintaining border security in the Nigeria Customs Service are: Lack of border demarcation between Nigeria and neighbouring countries, Nigerian government abandonment of border communities, threats of Boko Haram, inadequate resources and political interference.

GIABA (2020) examined money laundering/terrorist financing and the Smuggling of Goods in West Africa. They found that there are enormous challenges that frontline officials grapple with in the line of duty. These include extensive unmanned and porous land borders all over the region. This is worse in Nigeria and the trio landlocked countries of West Africa; Inadequate staffing in most of the border crossing, most of which lack the capacity and logistics to detect and investigate instances of smuggling; Knowledge and training facilities on AML/CFT are for a selected few; lack of cooperation from the public, including border communities; Intra and inter-agency collaboration is very low; Lack of modern tools like scanners and sniffer dogs for effective inspection; Loss of lives of official to combatant smugglers; Lack of cooperation amongst border officials to share intelligence across the border; Lack of cooperation from member States to fully implement the common external tariff in the region; Lack of STRs/CTRs and financial intelligence on proceeds of smuggling; Low public awareness about the danger and effect of smuggling, etc.

David, Adewunmi, & Olomu, (2018) examined factors occasioning rift among security agencies operating along Nigeria/Benin Republic border posts and implications on

national security. The paper adopted a descriptive research design while the population comprised of security agencies. Secondary data sources relevant textbooks, journals, Internet materials and documentary evidence were relied upon. The study found that the inherent lack of cooperation among security agencies was due to competition over which agency is superior and legally charged with the responsibility to perform specific functions as well as greed.

Basu(nd) examined illicit trade and transnational smuggling: key challenges for customs and border control agencies and argued that Customs and border control agencies face key challenges in preventing illicit trade and disrupting transnational smuggling operations. They highlighted three of those challenges namely the complexity of physical transportation geography in border management, adaptive capabilities of concealment, evasion, structural and operational flexibility by professional smugglers, and institutional coordination problems which may arise in customs and border control management.

Aremu & Saibu (2022) examined the challenges of the porous Nigeria-Benin Republic border and its impact on Nigeria's national security. They noted that over the years, Nigeria has been experiencing an upsurge in the number of illegal, irregular or undocumented immigrants in the country. These were attributed to many factors including porous borders, corruption and inefficient border patrol or monitoring among others. They contend that the numerous unofficial escape routes in the area have provided a great impetus to smugglers and human traffickers. The porous nature of these borders in Ogun State and elsewhere has no doubt heightened an upsurge in criminal activities in the country.

The Structural-Functionalism Theory

The functionalist theory draws its perspective mainly from the ideas of August Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim, which has the notion that society is a system (Jeje and IIim, 2016). Structural-functionalism theory sees society as a social structure made up of parts. All the parts are expected to function together interdependently and cohesively for the whole society by which equilibrium and peace can be maintained within the society. Change in one part has implications for the whole structure. Functionalists argued that society fails to survive because certain essential tasks that should be performed by the government and its institutions were not done.

Therefore, the functionalists' perspective is a useful analytical tool to describe society and identify its structural parts like security institutions and its functions at a particular

time. However, the theory is being criticized for disregarding social change, that it supports existing social arrangements. Spencer asserted that "border is the first line of defence against terrorism and the last line of a nation's territorial integrity (Onuoha, 2013). Hence, the porosity of the Nigeria-Benin border is due to the dysfunction of the border security governance. The inability of the border security personnel to provide effective policing along the border has led to the porosity, which made it possible for cross-border criminals to have access to Nigerian territory to commit heinous crimes such as small smuggling of arms, kidnapping, banditry, transnational human trafficking, armed robbery among other related activities, which threaten the peace, security and development of Nigerian state.

Methodology

This paper employed a cross-sectional survey design. It combined both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Data was sourced from both primary and secondary sources. questionnaire and interview were used in collecting primary data whilst secondary and time series data on GDP and unemployment were collected from publications of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The target population for this study was six thousand four hundred forty-two (6,442) derived from the population of specific units and departments in the Nigerian Customs Services (NCS), Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

Three Hundred and Six (363) respondents were sampled using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination technique. Purposive and simple random sampling was employed to obtain the sample from the targeted population. Quantitative data obtained was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software version 2.5 to generate descriptive and inferential Statistics. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression. Generally, the model is specified as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta X_1 + \mu$$

Where:

Y = economic development (Dependent Variable)

X = Smuggling of goods (Explanatory/Independent Variable)

β_0 = Constant term (Intercept)

β = Coefficient of tax leakage

μ = Error term (Stochastic Term)

Decision Rule Accept the alternative hypothesis if the P-value of the test is less than 0.05. Otherwise, reject.

Table 1.1. Table showing the distribution of the sample.

Sampled Area	Departments	Target Population
Nigerian Customs Service	Inspection & Enforcement	$\frac{3600 \times 363}{6,450} = 202$
Nigerian Immigration Services(NIS)	Department of Trade	$\frac{1500 \times 363}{6,450} = 85$
Nation Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)	Department of International Trade	$\frac{1,350 \times 363}{6,450} = 76$
Total		**363**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

1.10   Results and Discussion

Out of 363 questionnaires administered, 340 were returned and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as percentages, mean, and frequencies and presented below.

Table 1.2   Summary of Questionnaire Distributed and Retrieved

Sampled Area	Sample Size	Questionnaire Retrieved	Not Retrieved
Nigerian Customs Service	202	190	12
Nigerian Immigration Service	85	80	5
National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency	76	70	6
Total	**363**	**340/93.6**	**23/6.4**

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 1.2 above shows that out of Three Hundred Sixty-three (363) questionnaires administered, Three Hundred forty (340) questionnaires representing 93.6% were returned and used in the analysis below. Despite all efforts and repeated visits, Twenty-

Three (23) 6.4% were not received. However, the percentage of unreturned questionnaires was insignificant and did not affect the quality and quantity of data collected.

Table 1.2. Respondents Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	289	85%
Female	51	15%
Total	340	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 1.3 provides the respondent's gender. The analysis indicates that male respondents were far outnumbered with 85% while the female counterparts constituted 15% of the respondents. The breakdown indicates that the sample for the study was gender friendly. It also meant that females were not left out of the subject under investigation.

Table 1.3: Respondents Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25	37	10.9%
26– 35	96	28.3%
36-45	108	31.8%
46-60	69	20.2%
61>	30	8.8%
Total	340	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 1.4 above shows an uneven spread in the age of respondents with 31.8% between the age of 36-45. Respondents between the age of 26-25 years formed the second largest group with 28.3%. The relevance of this table is to demonstrate that the respondents were not just picked from one age bracket but spread out across the various age groups.

It also shows that respondents are old enough to have a good knowledge of the matter

being studied.

Table 1.4 Respondents Educational Qualification

Education	Frequency	Percentage
None	-	-
Primary	-	-
Secondary	174	51.1%
Tertiary	166	48.9%
Total	340	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 1.5 shows that 51.1% of the respondents acquired secondary education while

48.9% of the respondents acquired tertiary education. This implies that the responses

came from well-informed participants and hence devoid of reliability issues. It also

shows that most participants were literate enough to analyse the subject matter of the

study.

Table 1. 5: Respondents Length of Service with Agencies

Length of service	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 Years	43	12.7%
6-10 Years	54	15.7 %
11-15Years	55	16.1%
16-20 Years	58	17.5%
21-25 Years	58	17.5%
26-30 Years	47	13.6%
30>	25	7.1%
Total	340	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Results in Table 1.6 above show that 17.5% of the respondents worked with their

agencies for 16-20 years and 13.6% for 26-30 years. Another 15.7 % worked for 6-10

years and 16.1% for 11-15 years. This indicates that most respondents have worked in

Nigerian Customs long enough to have good knowledge of smuggling activities across

the Benin-Nigeria border and Nigeria in general.

Table 1.6: Strategies implemented by Nigerian Customs in combating smuggling of contraband consumer goods across the Nigeria-Benin border

QI.	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.
1.	Border Closure	58.69	49.28
2.	Import Restriction	71.31	61.51
3.	Increased Tariff	71.19	60.54
4.	Joint Border Checkpoints/ Patrol	77.82	63.79
5.	Implementation of ECOWAS Common External Tariff	63.73	38.78
6.	Arrest and conviction smugglers	71.19	60.54
7.	Seizure and destruction of smuggled goods	53.94	43.15
8.	Implementation of Trade Agreements	53.94	43.15
9.	Implementation of Payments Systems Reforms	71.19	60.54

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 1.6 presents the mean and standard deviation for the effectiveness of measures

implemented by Nigerian Customs in the fight against smuggling of contraband

consumer goods across the Nigeria-Benin border. Border Closure measures had a Mean

of: 58.69 and Std. dev.: 49.28. Border closure is perceived as somewhat effective, with

a moderate mean. However, the high standard deviation suggests a considerable range

of opinions on its effectiveness. Import restriction had Mean: 71.31 and Std. dev.:

61.51; Import restrictions are perceived as relatively effective, with a high mean. The

standard deviation indicates some variability in the perception of their effectiveness.

Increased Tariff had Mean: 71.19 and Std. dev.: 60.54 indicated that increased tariffs

are also perceived as relatively effective, with a high mean and some variability in

perceptions as indicated by the standard deviation.

Joint Border Check Points/Patrol had a Mean: of 77.82 and Std. dev.: 63.79. This indicates that Joint border checkpoints and patrols are perceived as highly effective, with a very high mean. The standard deviation suggests a strong consensus on their effectiveness. Adoption of ECOWAS Common External Tariff had a Mean: 63.73 and Std. dev.: 38.78. This also indicates that the adoption of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff is perceived as moderately effective, with a moderate mean and a relatively low standard deviation.

Arrest and Conviction of Smugglers had Mean: 71.19 and Std. dev.: 60.54. This indicates that the arrest and conviction of smugglers is perceived as relatively effective, with a high mean and some variability in responses. Seizure and destruction of smuggled goods had Mean: 53.94 and Std. dev.: 43.15 indicating it was perceived as moderately effective, with a moderate mean and standard deviation. Implementation of trade agreements had Mean: 53.94 and Std. dev.: 43.15. This indicates that trade agreements were also perceived as moderately effective, with a moderate mean and standard deviation. Implementation of payments systems reforms had Mean: 71.19 and Std. dev.: 60.54. this indicate that payments systems reforms are perceived as relatively effective, with a high mean and some variability in perceptions.

In summary, the table reflects perceptions of the effectiveness of various measures implemented by Nigerian Customs to combat smuggling at the Nigeria-Benin border. Joint border checkpoints and patrols are seen as highly effective, while other measures like import restrictions, increased tariffs, and the arrest and conviction of smugglers are also viewed as relatively effective. The standard deviation reveals the extent of consensus or variability in these perceptions among respondents. While some measures, such as joint border checkpoints, penalties and punishment, and trade agreements, receive generally positive assessments, others, like border closure, import restrictions, and increased tariffs, are largely seen as ineffective.

Table 1.7. Challenges being faced in combating the smuggling of contraband consumer goods across the Benin -Nigeria border

QI.	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.
10.	inadequate Manpower by Nigerian Customs	74.18	53.75
11.	Weak Anti-Smuggling Laws	36.18	34.15
12.	Long and Porous borders	82.16	42.63
13.	Poor Remuneration Security Officials	36.78	33.14
14.	Inadequate Patrol Equipment	52.26	66.30
15.	Poor Funding of Nigerian Customs	49.28	36.93
16.	Poor inter-agency Border Security	51.86	45.21
17.	Delay in prosecution of smugglers	45.48	54.69
18.	Nigeria's historical Ties with border Communities	66.88	73.09
19.	Lack of political Will	63.55	69.47
20.	Corruption among security Agencies	59.32	51.91
21.	Inaccessible/Unmotorable Border Terrain	65.05	72.23
22.	Non-application of Technological based Security Approach	63.55	76.13

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 1.7 provides the mean and standard deviation for various challenges faced by the Nigerian Customs Service in combating the smuggling of contraband consumer goods across the Benin-Nigeria border. Inadequate Manpower by Nigerian Customs: Mean: 74.18 Std. dev.: 53.75. This indicates that inadequate manpower is perceived as a significant challenge, with a high mean. The standard deviation suggests some variability in the perception of this challenge. Weak anti-smuggling laws had Mean: 36.18 Std. dev.: 34.15. This indicates that anti-smuggling laws are perceived as a moderate challenge, with a moderate mean and standard deviation. Long and Porous Borders: Mean: 82.16 Std. dev.: 42.63. This indicates that long and porous borders are

seen as a highly significant challenge, with a very high mean. The standard deviation indicates some variability in perceptions. Poor remuneration for customs officials: Mean: 36.78 Std. dev.: 33.14. This indicates that poor remuneration for customs officials is perceived as a moderate challenge, with a moderate mean and standard deviation. Inadequate patrol equipment: Mean: 52.26 Std. dev.: 66.30. This indicates that inadequate patrol equipment is viewed as a significant challenge, with a relatively high mean. The high standard deviation suggests variability in this perception. Poor Funding of Nigerian Customs: Mean: 49.28 Std. dev.: 36.93. this indicates that poor funding of Nigerian Customs is considered a moderate challenge, with a moderate mean and standard deviation. Poor Inter-Agency Border Security: Mean: 51.86 Std. dev.: 45.21. This indicates that Poor inter-agency border security is seen as a significant challenge, with a relatively high mean. The standard deviation indicates some variability in this perception.

Delay in Prosecution of Suspected Smugglers: Mean: 45.48 Std. dev.: 54.69. this indicates that delay in the prosecution of smugglers is perceived as a significant challenge, with a relatively high mean. The standard deviation suggests variability in this perception. Nigeria's Historical Ties with Border Communities: Mean: 66.88 Std. dev.: 73.09. this indicates that Nigeria's historical ties with border communities are considered a significant challenge, with a high mean. The high standard deviation reflects significant variability in perceptions.

Lack of Political Will: Mean: 63.55 Std. dev.: 69.47this indicates that Lack of political will is viewed as a significant challenge, with a high mean. The standard deviation indicates variability in this perception. Corrupt among security agents: Mean: 59.32 Std. dev.: 51.91. this indicates that the presence of corrupt law enforcement agents is seen as a significant challenge, with a relatively high mean. The standard deviation suggests some variability in this perception. Inaccessible /unmotorable border terrain: Mean:

65.05 Std. dev.: 72.23. This indicates that inaccessible border terrain is perceived as a significant challenge, with a relatively high mean. The high standard deviation reflects variability in perceptions. Non-Application of Technological-Based Security Approach: Mean: 63.55 Std. dev: 76.13. this indicates that the lack of a technological-based security approach is considered a significant challenge, with a high mean. The very high standard deviation indicates significant variability in this perception.

In summary, the table illustrates the perceptions of various challenges faced by the Nigerian Customs Service in combating smuggling across the Benin-Nigeria border. Long and porous borders, inadequate manpower, and historical ties with border communities are seen as highly significant challenges. The standard deviations reflect varying degrees of consensus or disagreement among respondents regarding these challenges. These challenges encompass issues related to manpower, penalties, border security, funding, political will, and technology adoption, among others. The results highlight the complexity of addressing smuggling and the need for multifaceted solutions and reforms within the customs service and across relevant government agencies.

Most of the respondents interviewed affirmed that Nigerian Customs is being faced with numerous challenges in combating the smuggling of goods:

> These included inadequate manpower, weak penalties for smugglers, long and porous border, poor remuneration for customs officials, inadequate patrol equipment, poor inter-agency collaboration, weak political will, delay in prosecution of offenders, ethnic affiliations between Nigerians and her neighbours, corruption by law enforcement agencies. Others include non-application of information technological (IT) based border security and difficult border terrain as challenges militating against effective anti-smuggling operations.

The findings on the challenges encountered by the Nigerian Customs in the fight against the smuggling of contraband consumer goods especially Nigeria's social ties with Benin

and the long and porous border between the two countries are consistent with the works

of Olaifa (2017) who noted that:

> The difficulty in combating smuggling along Nigerian/Benin border posts cannot be divorced from the existing social relations between the citizens of the two countries. Many Nigerians have their kin and kin resident in the Republic of Benin and vice versa. The artificial geographical boundary has not successfully broken the cultural ties between them and this fact has inhibited control over migration and socio-economic interactions between the peoples of the two countries. The vast borderline between the two countries has also posed a challenge to security maintenance in the area Olaifa (2017, p84).

This is supported by, Basu (2013), Omale (2014), and Aremu & Saibu (2022) who

identified issues like low levels of automation and computerisation, lack of training and

professionalism, unhealthy inter-agency rivalry and lack of synergy/information sharing

to have sowed seeds of mutual distrusts especially in the conduct of inter-agencies

operations as challenges being faced by security agents responsible for border security.

Test of Hypotheses

HO1   There is no significant relationship between the strategies implemented by Nigerian Customs to mitigate the smuggling of contraband consumer goods and a reduction of smuggling activities across Benin-Border.

The result of the regression analysis presented in Table 1.8 shows a summary of a

simple linear regression analysis, which explores the relationship between the measures

implemented by Nigerian Customs to mitigate the smuggling of contraband consumer

goods and the reduction of smuggling activities across the border. The standardized

coefficient for smuggling of consumer goods is 0.193, which represents the strength and

direction of the relationship between this predictor variable and the dependent variable.

The t-value is a statistical measure that assesses the significance of the predictor

variable in explaining the variation in the dependent variable. In this model, the t-value

for smuggling of consumer goods is 1.1613. The R column shows the correlation

coefficient, which measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between

the predictor variable and the dependent variable. In this case, the correlation coefficient

is 0.133, indicating a positive but relatively weak correlation. The R-squared value is a

measure of how well the predictor variable explains the variation in the dependent

variable. In this model, the R-squared is 0.015, meaning that only 1.5% of the variation

in the effectiveness of measures implemented to curb smuggling can be explained by

the smuggling of consumer goods

The p-value associated with the predictor variable indicates the statistical significance

of the relationship. The p-value for the smuggling of consumer goods is 0.039, which is

less than the conventional significance level of 0.05. This suggests a statistically

significant relationship between the smuggling of consumer goods and the effectiveness

of measures implemented to curb smuggling. The hypothesis was therefore rejected

Table 1.8: Regression Analysis on the relationship between the measures implemented by Nigerian Customs to mitigate smuggling of contraband consumer goods and the reduction of smuggling activities across Benin-Border.

| | Standardized Coefficients | | | | | Adj. | |
Model	Beta	t	R	R^2	R^2	P-value
1 (Constant)		13.631	.133[a]	.015	.018	
Smuggling of consumer goods	.193	1.1613				.039

Source: Fieldwork, 2022. Dependent Variable: Measures implemented to curb
smuggling

b. Predictors: (Constant), Smuggling of consumer goods

HO2. There is no significant relationship between challenges faced by Nigerian Customs in the fight against the smuggling of contraband consumer goods and the increase in smuggling activities across the Benin -Nigeria border.

The regression analysis presented in Table 1.9 disclosed the beta value (beta = .188 with

the R-square of .081 which indicated that the influence of the independent variable on

the dependent variable was 33%. This is also applicable with the p-value of .012

obtained which was found to be less than 0.05 level of significance. The p-value

obtained suggested that Nigerian Customs is facing daunting challenges in combating the smuggling of consumer goods across the Benin -Nigeria border. The hypothesis was therefore not retained.

The regression analysis presented in Table 1.9 shows the summary of a simple linear regression analysis that explores the relationship between the challenges faced in combating the smuggling of consumer goods across the Benin-Nigeria border (the dependent variable) and the smuggling of consumer goods (the independent variable). The standardized coefficient for smuggling of consumer goods is 0.188, which represents the strength and direction of the relationship between this predictor variable and the dependent variable. The t-value is a statistical measure that assesses the significance of the predictor variable in explaining the variation in the dependent variable. In this model, the t-value for smuggling of consumer goods is 0.775. The correlation coefficient is 0.114indicating a positive but relatively weak correlation. The R-squared is 0.081, meaning that only 8.1% of the variation in the challenges faced in combating smuggling can be explained by the smuggling of consumer goods. The p-value associated with the predictor variable indicates the statistical significance of the relationship. In this model, the p-value for the smuggling of consumer goods is 0.012, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05. This suggests a statistically significant relationship between the smuggling of consumer goods and the challenges faced in combating smuggling.

Table 1.9: Regression Analysis on the challenges being faced by Nigerian Customs in combating smuggling of contraband consumer goods across the Benin -Nigeria Border

| Model | Standardized Coefficients | | | | Adj. | |
	Beta	t	R	R^2	R^2	P-value
1 (Constant)		11.663				
Smuggling of consumer goods	.188	0.775	.114[a]	.081	.033	.012

Source: Fieldwork, 2022   a. Dependent Variable: Challenges

b. Predictors: (Constant), Smuggling of consumer goods

Discussion of Findings

The findings of research question one revealed that the strategies implemented by Nigerian Customs to combat smuggling across the Benin-Nigeria Border such as border closure, joint border patrol, and border checkpoints have significantly contributed to reducing smuggling across the Nigeria-Benin border. This finding is in agreement with the works of Adetula (2015) and Ismail & Rabi (2022) who acknowledged the need for the implementation of alternative measures if smuggling across the Benin-Nigeria border is to be addressed.

The findings of research question two indicate that Nigerian Customs is faced with daunting challenges in the fight against the smuggling of contraband goods across the Benin-Nigeria border. These include a shortage of manpower by Nigerian Customs, weak anti-smuggling laws, poor inter-agency synergy, inadequate funding, inadequate training of personnel, inadequate barrack accommodations, lack of IT-based border security equipment, and attacks by border communities who harbour suspected smugglers. Others include long and porous borders, poor funding, and delays in prosecution of suspected smugglers among others. These findings are consistent with the works of (Basu, 2013, 2014, & 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings and hypotheses tested, this paper concludes that the measures implemented by the government to address smuggling activities across the Benin-Nigeria border have not yielded the desired result. It further argued that Nigerian Customs is being faced with numerous challenges in discharging their duties of combating the smuggling of goods across the Benin-Nigeria border.

Based on the findings of the paper, the following recommendations are made to mitigate the smuggling of consumer goods and its impact on the Nigerian economy.

1.   The Nigerian Customs Services needs to be overhauled. Custom agents, especially the anti-smuggling unit should be trained regularly on modern border security techniques. Equipment such as motorcycles, patrol vehicles,   walkie-talkies, raincoats/boots, flashlights, walkie-talkies, whistles, rifles, tents,   etc must be provided in good quantity. Digital surveillance gadgets such as drones and hi-tech Circuit Television Cameras and scanners e.t.c should be deployed. Salaries and allowances should be reviewed upward to motivate personnel and disincentive from receiving gratifications. Anti-smuggling units who make outstanding seizures should be rewarded as a form of motivation.   Barracks should be built and equipped for personnel's at all the major border crossings.

2.   Stiffer anti-smuggling laws should be passed that will see convicted smugglers sentenced to life imprisonment. The government should overhaul operations at   Nigerian Sea Ports in a bid to decongest and simplify imports and payment systems. Intense and sustained inter-agency collaboration is required if the smuggling of consumer goods is to be significantly curtailed in Nigeria. The various security agencies at the border should collaborate and coordinate their activities to combat crime within the country. Also, anti-   smuggling fight should be taken beyond the borders to the markets. Nigerian   Customs should collaborate with relevant agencies towards seizures and destruction of smuggled items. The government should consider wholly or partial perimeter fencing of border crossings that are not motorable and inaccessible for vehicular patrol but are being used by smugglers.

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