

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES' PROTOCOL ON FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS: A STUDY OF NIGERIA-BENIN REPUBLIC RELATIONS (1999-2023)

OMINYI VINCENT CHIMA
Department of Political Science
Ebonyi State College of Education Ikwo
Email: vominyi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Economic Community of West African States' protocol on free movement of persons is one of the instruments designed to achieve the goal of integration of the sub-region. Its efficacy has been questioned by various scholars, owing to inherent problem, on who ought to be called community citizens and the other one arising from conflicting domestic laws of member states. Consequently, some scholars opine that the protocol is a success in terms of implementation, thus, movement of people for example between Nigeria and Benin Republic has improved substantially after the promulgation of the protocol. While others disagree over that. Interrogating the divergent views, the following research questions were raised: has the ratification of the protocol on free movement of persons improved movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic? Has the implementation of the protocol on free movement of persons integrated Nigeria and Benin Republic? Anchoring the work on Neo-functional integration theory; a cross-sectional survey design was used, thus, method of data collection was primary with questionnaire designed in five point Likert scale format as instruments. Analyses were made using Mean, Simple percentage. Chi-square was for testing of hypotheses. Utilizing all these, the findings are that not without challenges, the protocol has improved movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic. It has also to a reasonable extent integrated the two countries. The study recommends more enlightenment of people concerning the protocol; strengthening of ECOWAS judicial system and checkmating of sharp practices at the borderline, as ways of enhancing the protocol.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In a bid to integrate West African countries to ensure socio-economic development of the sub-region, Economic Community of West African State, (ECOWAS) was formed on 28th May, 1975 in Lagos-Nigeria, by fifteen countries. Cape Verde Island later Joined to make them sixteen. However, as Chibuzor (2005) observes, Mauritania withdrew her membership in the year 2000. Similarly, Wasike and Tasamba (2024) also note the announcement of exit from the bloc by the three Sahel states, namely: Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, following their misunderstanding with the regional body, arising from military overthrow of democratically elected government of these

countries. With these developments therefore, ECOWAS could be said to be currently a twelve-member body.

The treaty that brought it into being, sought sub-regional economic integration through guaranteeing of free movement of persons, goods and services. Thus, four years after the promulgation of the treaty, precisely on 29th May, 1979, member countries adopted protocol relating to free movement of persons, residence and establishment in Dakar-Senegal. Under this protocol, entitled protocol A/P/5/79, community citizens are expected to enter, reside and engage in economic activities in any member country of their choice. And in the process, it is expected that, a single regional socio-economic space, where all citizens can benefit from opportunities including the utilization of services, access to coastal areas by landlocked states and vice-versa, would come true. To realize this, a three phased approach lasting five years each to implement the protocol was adopted.

The first phase, right of entry which entered into force in June 1980, gave ECOWAS citizens right to stay for ninety (90) days within ECOWAS Members' territories free of visas. The community citizens are however expected to possess valid travel documents such as: ECOWAS Passports, ECOWAS Travel Certificate, International health certificate and the likes.

The second phase signed in July 1986 and entitled 1986 supplementary protocol A/SP.1/7/86, was devoted to the achievement of residence. In this case, community citizens do not only have right to reside but can seek and carry out income earning employment in any ECOWAS member states, provided they had obtained ECOWAS Resident Card or Permit. Member countries are obliged to give ECOWAS citizens in this regard, equal treatment with her nationals in areas of employment, security, participation in social and cultural activities.

The third phase entitled 1990 supplementary protocol A/SP.2/5/90, was the last phase of the Protocol, and it focused on the facilitation of business through the right of community citizens to establish enterprises whether registered or unregistered ones, in member states other than their states of origin, unaffected by expatriate quota system usually subjected to other foreign nationals.

By Virtue of being signatories to this protocol, ECOWAS members have entered into social contract with one another, and are therefore in this respect, under obligation to implement its provisions. In tune with this, they went further to adopt Border countries or local integration concept (Adepoju, 2013). By this, member countries having common borders are to ensure harmonious integration of the regional economy, through facilitation of free movement of people and embarkation on joint social, economic and cultural development projects.

As not just ECOWAS member countries signatories to free movement of persons' protocol, but as border countries, Nigeria and Benin Republic, by way of compliance to the protocol, allow ninety (90) days stay of community citizens in their territories without visa, provided they are with ECOWAS travel documents. These ECOWAS travel documents according to Ubi (2005) include: ECOWAS Certificate, ECOW AS Passport, Residence Card, Health Certificate and the Brown card for vehicular insurance and movement.

The usage of these ECOWAS travel documents is meant to cure the mischief of visa regime. These ills stem from the fact that countries issuing visa do not as well guarantee entrance to the holder. In the case entry is allowed, such is attached with various conditionalities of stay. They include but not limited to: territory covered by the visa, date of validity, period of stay, time <https://ebscoejer.org/>

frame for entry and exit, prohibition against employment and worst of it all, revocation at will ([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/visa-\(document\)](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/visa-(document))).

These progresses in the implementation of the protocol on free movement of persons however, are dented by a number of factors, namely: incompatibilities in immigration and custom policies, different monetary zones, and above all, anti-free movement activities of law enforcement agencies in the border particularly between Nigeria and Benin Republic, who make traveling difficult for ECOWAS citizens, regardless of the provision of protocol on free movement of persons.

Worried over these, the researcher is tempted to say that, the protocol may not have lived-up to its expectation, by way of improving movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic, after all, if it had, all these hindrances would not have been existing.

Thus, out of curiosity, the researcher sought to clear this puzzle, by finding out the extent of implementation of the protocol by Nigeria and Benin Republic, and through this, determine whether the protocol has improved movement of people between these two countries.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The provisions of the protocol on free movement of persons and its actual implementation have become worrisome phenomena. These stem from the fact that, despite its provisions, movement of people across national boundaries is still bedeviled with difficulties. A cursory look at Seme where Nigeria borders Benin Republic in the south, shows that, ECOWAS citizens who supposed to be crossing to either sides of these countries without hitches provided they are with their traveling documents, face uphill tasks while trying to do so. This stems from the fact that, the holder of such documents is often subjected to a strict scrutiny that is time wasting and fault-finding. With the help of touts called "Klebe" working at the instance of security operatives, this unnecessary scrutiny is perfected to an extent that these documents may in some occasions look inadmissible, since the latter are illiterates and illegal mercenaries that have no business with the protocol, but were solely brought to help in extortion. This creates a situation where it is as though easier to offer bribe than present travel documents and risk being subjected to unnecessary checks filled with stereotype judgments.

The worst-case scenario is that, admissibility or inadmissibility of people in Nigeria and Benin Republic is at the whims and caprices of these countries, and not a function of entering into social contract with ECOWAS and its attendant protocol on free movement of persons. The reason for this is that, the article 4 of the protocol gives right to member countries to reject any person they consider inadmissible into their territories. This on the surface level may sound plausible, considering that security which this is based on, is the first law of nature, but beyond this, the protocol was unable to foresee subjectivism akin to human nature, which can play its way in such circumstance, making it possible for member countries to implement the protocol, when situation for it favours them. Thereby putting all intents and purposes the protocol was made, into serious jeopardy.

1.3 Research question

It is based on all these above that the researcher sought answers to the following:

<https://ebscoejer.org/>

1. Has the ratification of protocol on free movement of persons improved movement of persons between Nigeria and Benin Republic?
2. Has the implementation of this protocol Integrated Nigeria and Benin Republic?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The driving force behind this research is to assess the extent to which Nigeria and Benin Republic have complied with Economic Community of West African States' Protocol on free movement of persons. Specifically, the researcher sought:

To find out whether, the ratification of the protocol on free movement of persons has improved movement of persons between Nigerian and Benin Republic.

To establish whether the implementation of the protocol has integrated Nigeria and Benin Republic.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research will add knowledge to the existing literatures on ECOWAS protocol on free movement of person, and thus serve as a reference material for researchers carrying out work on a related problem.

Members of the public will also find the work interesting, as it will serve as stream of knowledge on the existence of the protocol and thus, expose them to benefits therein. By virtue of looking at the extent of implementation of the protocol, it will as well serve as a guide to ECOWAS and member state officials on where further progress is required to achieve full implementation. Private and corporate individuals will also know where to focus their policy advocacy efforts.

Apart from the role it is playing in the realm of literature, this work exposed areas of difficulties in the protocol, and through this, helps member countries to seek for solution, which may come as streamlining of border proceedings. The effect of which, would accelerate the economic development of Nigeria and Benin Republic, with its positive effect on the standard of living of the citizenry.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

There is no relationship between the protocol on free movement of persons and improvement on the movement of persons between Nigeria and Benin republic.

There is no significant relationship between implementation of the protocol and integration of Nigeria and Benin Republic.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research covers issues on movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic and the goal this is intended to achieve. It was from 1999 to 2023. Our bias for this periodization is informed by the fact that, it was within this chosen time frame, that the protocol received more serious attention, as members were made to embrace two-track approach in solving their problems instead of doing this at individual level, with its attendant different pace and rate in developments.

Accordingly, Adepoju (2005) observes that, owing to the difficulties in getting member countries to implement the community's protocol, Nigeria spearheaded the adoption of two-track approach in 1999, which allows two or more member states to jointly implement integration programmes,

<https://ebscoejer.org/>

as against principle of variable geometry that allows some member states within the organization, to move at different speed than others.

On the other hand, Nigeria and Benin Republic, the focal points of this study, occupied a pride of place in this research work, because, these two countries are not only ECOWAS countries but are contiguous states. With Nigeria advocating for two-track approach, there is need to conduct a study, to see how she does this with a neighboring country, hence this research.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The usage of primary data in this Research work unarguably provided a firsthand information, however, it would have been better if Time Series was employed in data gathering, but non recording of movement of ECOWAS citizens among member countries, made the work to rely on the usage of primary and secondary data (that are not time series) in determining whether the protocol has improved movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic.

In the course of using this, there was low level of cooperation on the part of the respondents, for instance, the Immigration and Custom officials were reluctant to accept the questionnaire instruments for information to be elicited from them. Those who accepted same, could not be found when the Research Assistant went back for collection, as they were no more in their duty posts as a result of transfer to other areas or change in hour of duties.

Traders presented worst case scenario as many of them were said to have embarked on various business trips across the border, leaving no note concerning when to be back for the questionnaire instruments to be retrieved from them, amidst timeframe for this research to be concluded. These indeed affected percentage of questionnaire returned and the consequential quality of this research.

Again, some of these respondents used were French speaking ones, to this extent, there was problem of language barriers, making it possible for the Researcher to rely solely on Research Assistant for interpretation of information elicited from them. The implication is that, the data generated during the field survey. may not have been hundred percent reliable.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Cross-Sectional survey design would be adopted. In this type of survey, Respondents are representatives drawn from cross-sections of sample size, selected from groups of population scattered among other groups. Our bias for this design is informed by the nature of variables and population whose opinions are required to test the hypotheses raised for the study. The variables require unique population that has knowledge of the protocol under study, and as such, involve participants who were in Seme-Krake border.

On the other hand, using materials from secondary data would reinforce the primary data and make the whole gamut of the research, more embellishing.

3.2 Location of the Study

The problem under study will be probed into, in Seme border. Although, Igolo-Idiroko, Seme-Krake and Nikki-Chikkanda are all gateways to Nigeria and Benin Republics, and are called ECOWAS Inter-state roads. With the first- two in the South and Central of South-West Nigeria respectively, while Nikki-Chikkanda is in the North (Oluyinka, 2004, p.80). But the choice of Seme as ideal prism from which these two countries can be seen and studied is that, it is not only ECOWAS recognized route for observation of protocol on free movement of persons; the fulcrum of this research, but it is the busiest when compared to its other counterparts (Igolo-Idiroko and Nikki-Chikanda). Ngboawaji (2011, p.19) describes it as the 'busiest and most mercurial of all border posts in West Africa.

3.3 Population of the Study

The researcher made use of accessible population of frontier workers (Immigration and Custom officials) and traders in Seme-Krake border, representing public and private sectors, respectively. We estimated the total population to be two hundred (267) using Cochran population size. Our decision is informed by the submission of Ajireloja(2023) who notes that Cochran's formula is usually used in a situation where the population size is too large (or infinite) or unknown. The population that shuttles the ECOWAS route on daily basis is unknown, because as earlier noted, such movements are not recorded.

The Cochran formula for Population size determination is as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p(1-P)}{e^2}$$

Where

n= sample size

Z = Z-score which depend on the confidence level chosen by the researcher

The Z-score indicates the number of standard deviations by which a raw score or data point is above or below the mean.

The Z –score for a confidence level of 80% = 1.28

The Z- score for a confidence level of 85% = 1.44

The Z- score for a confidence level of 90% = 1.65

The Z-score for a confidence level of 95% = 1.96

The Z-score for a confidence level of 99% = 2.58

As Ajireola (2023) notes, confidence level of 95% is usually used when dealing with human population.

P= the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population

In other words, it is the expected percentage of the population with the desired attribute. A proportion of 0.5 is commonly used when dealing with human population

E= margin of error or confidence interval.

This is the margin of error that you can tolerate in choosing your samples. The commonly used margin of error when dealing with human population range from 1% to 10%. (Ajireola, 2023)

Applying the above to this study which has unknown population size, the following sufficed: sample with 95% confidence level, a proportion of 0.5, and a margin of error of 6% (that is 0.06)

The sample size =267.

Note that the Z-score for 95% confidence level is 1.96.

$$\begin{aligned}n &= \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{(0.06)^2} \\&= \frac{3.8416 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.0036} \\&= \frac{0.9604}{0.0036} \\&= 266.78 \\N &= 267\end{aligned}$$

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The samples were chosen using purposive and stratified sampling techniques. The purposive sampling was used to select frontier workers and traders that participated in the survey. The justification for choosing to make use of purposive sampling, stems from the fact that, the nature of the research requires unique individuals that possess the relevant and good knowledge of the subject matter to be studied, and as such requires the use of respondents that are scattered among groups of population, whose total figures are difficult to determine because of absence of reliable data that captured the census figures of each group that the respondents were drawn from. Thus, the researcher saved time, energy and resources that would have been expended on respondents that have little or no knowledge concerning the subject matter.

3.5 Sources of Data Collection

The data used for this study were collected from two main sources namely: primary and secondary sources.

3.6 Validity of the Instrument

Validity of instrument by way of definition is a term used to denote a situation whereby the research instrument measures what it supposes to measure. To achieve this, two methods were used, they include: content validity and face validity. On the former, the researcher ensured that the questions contained in the research questionnaire used for the generation of data during the survey, were directly drawn from research questions, which in turn mirrored research objectives

and hypotheses. On the later, the questionnaire items were given to the experts in the field of Political Science, for vetting.

The outcome of this was used to make necessary modifications, which eventually led to the production of the final instrument used in this study.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

The researcher adopted external consistency methods of reliability, particularly, test re-test method. This was done by conducting test on the same set of people, but at different times, that is within the interval of two weeks, from the first survey. And the results of the two surveys showed high coefficient of correlation, hence, we concluded that the results of the tests are reliable.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data used for analysis in this research are quantitative in nature. They were generated through the use of questionnaire instruments. These data are in form of figures and thus processed through classification, tabulating, summary, interpretation and conclusion drawing.

The statistical formulae for calculating this chi-square is as stated below;

$$X^2 = \sum (O-E)^2$$

Where, X^2 = chi-square sign
O = observed variable
E = expected variable
 \sum = summation sign

Decision rule for the study: The mean (X) score of the various responses made was calculated at 3.00 using likert scale, hence any item that is equal to or above 3.00 was regarded as agreed, while below is disagreed.

This was obtained by summing up the values assigned to the responses made as follows: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2 Strongly Disagree = 1. A these translate to $5+4+3+2+1 = 15/5 = 3.00$

RESULTS

The data collected from the respondents during the field survey were processed, analyzed and displayed as follows:

Table 3: Rates of Questionnaire Returned

Questionnaire	No of Respondents	Percentage
Returned	151	57%
Not returned	116	43%
Total	267	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

With the above figures in mind, one may have expected better compliance, but considering the difficulties in conducting research in the border, seventy (57%) percent return, cannot be said to be discouraging. After all, it was reported that the rate of the returns, was because of high interests some of the respondents have on the subject matter.

Based on this therefore, the researcher adopted one hundred and fifty-one (151) as the valid number of sample size used in the analysis of the field survey.

The questionnaire administered to them was eventually used as follows: Question 1-5 were used as units of measurement for the variables raised in hypothesis one of the study. Similarly, question 6-10, were used as indices of measurement for issue raised in hypothesis two. All these hypotheses mirror their respective research questions. And these research questions where in turn, presented in their discrete and separate question tables.

4.1 Research Question 1

Has the ratification of protocol on free movement of persons, improved movement of persons between Nigeria and Benin Republic.

Table 4: Data Distribution on Research Question 1. Calculation of Chi-Square for the Hypothesis 1

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	UN	A	SA	Total
1	Free visa requirement for traveling has improved 90 days staying of ECOWAS citizens in Nigeria and Benin Republic	(30.4) 11	(25.4) 20	(13.4) 10	(32.8) 30	(49) 80	151
2	Holding of ECOWAS residence cards extends staying in Nigeria and Benin Republic beyond 90 days	(30.4) 41	(25.4) 30	(13.4) 40	(32.8) 11	(49) 29	151
3	Travel certificate or ECOWAS passport enhances free traveling between Nigeria and Benin Republic	(30.4) 10	(25.4) 11	(13.4) 2	(32.8) 48	(49) 80	151
4	There is no discrimination of Nigerians into business ventures in Cotonou	(30.4) 10	(25.4) 26	(13.4) 10	(32.8) 60	(49) 6	151
5	Beninoise are not subjected to quota System while doing business In Nigeria	(30.4) 80	(25.4) 40	(13.4) 10	(32.8) 15	(49) 6	151
	Total	152	127	67	164	245	755

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Note: Figures in bracket are in percentage

Expected frequency formulae = $\frac{RT \times CT}{Grand\ Total}$

Where RT = Row Total
CT = Column Total

4.1.1 Testing of Hypothesis 1

H₀: The ratification of protocol on free movement of persons has not significantly improved the movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic

Table 5: Chi-square Calculation for Hypothesis 1

S/N	Observed Variable (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
1	11	30.4	-19.4	376.36	12.38
2	20	25.4	-5.4	29.16	1.15
3	10	13.4	-3.4	11.56	0.86
4	30	32.8	-2.8	7.84	0.24
5	80	49	31	961	19.61
6	41	30.4	10.6	112.36	3.70
7	30	25.4	4.6	21.16	0.83
8	40	13.4	26.6	707.56	52.80
9	11	32.8	-21.8	475.24	14.49
10	29	49	-20	400	8.16
11	10	30.4	-20.4	416.16	13.69
12	11	25.4	-14.4	207.36	8.16
13	2	13.4	-11.4	129.96	9.70
14	48	32.8	15.2	231.04	7.04
15	80	49	31	961	19.61
16	10	30.4	-20.4	416.16	13.69
17	26	25.4	0.6	0.36	0.01
18	5	13.4	-8.4	70.56	5.27
19	60	32.8	27.2	739.84	22.56
20	50	49	1	1	0.02
21	80	30.4	49.6	2460.16	80.93
22	40	25.4	14.6	213.16	8.39
23	10	13.4	-3.4	11.56	0.88
24	15	32.8	-17.8	316.84	9.66
25	6	49	-43	1849	37.73
					351.56

Chi-square χ^2 calculated = $\Sigma(O - E)^2$

Where O = Observed Frequency
 E = Expected Frequency
 Σ = Summation

Therefore, chi-square calculated (χ^2) = 351.56

Test techniques, chi-square tabulated (χ^2_{α}) (χ^2_{ν}), α

Where: V = degree of freedom (r-1) (C-1)

$$= (5-1)(5-1)$$

$$= (4)(4) = 16$$

AND $\alpha =$ level of significance

$$\alpha = \text{at } 5\% = 0.05$$

$$4^2 + = 4^2_{16} 0.05 = 26.296$$

(i) **Decision rule:** The decision rule is that if the chi-square calculated (χ^2_c), is greater than chi-square tabulated (χ^2_t) reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, otherwise accept the null hypothesis.

(ii) **Decision:** Since (χ^2_c (351.56) is greater than (χ^2_t (26.296), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, thus conclude that the ratification of the protocol on free movement of persons, has significantly improved the movement of people between Nigeria and Benin republic at 5% level of significance.

4.2 Research Question 2

Has the implementation of protocol on free movement of persons helped in integrating Nigeria and Benin Republic?

Table 6: Observed Perception of Respondents and the Expected Frequency on whether the Implementation of the Protocol, has helped in integrating Nigeria and Benin Republic

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	UN	A	SA	Total
6	The protocol on free movement of persons, has brought some levels of efficiency in the understanding of languages between Nigeria and Benin Republic	62 (62.2)	70 (38.4)	1 (2.2)	10 (21.2)	8 (27)	151
7	The protocol enhanced bilateral exploration of natural resources between Nigeria and Benin Republic	105 (62.2)	25 (38.4)	2 (2.2)	14 (21.2)	5 (27)	151
8	The joint ownership of companies by these two countries is as a result of the protocol	25 (62.2)	11 (38.4)	3 (2.2)	40 (21.2)	72 (27)	151
9	Removal of roaming charges by Global com network provider, in Nigeria and Benin Republic is as a result of the protocol	30 (62.2)	41 (38.4)	4 (2.2)	35 (21.2)	41 (27)	151
10	The protocol abolished artificial boundaries between Nigeria and Benin Republic	89 (62.2)	45 (38.4)	1 (2.2)	7 (21.2)	9 (27)	151
Total		311	192	11	106	135	755

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Note: Figures in bracket are in percentage

Expected frequency formulae = $\frac{RT \times CT}{Grand\ Total}$

Where RT = Row Total
 CT = Column Total

4.2.1 Testing of Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the implementation of ECOWAS protocol in free movement of persons and the integration of Nigeria and Benin Republic

Table 7: Chi-square Calculation for Hypothesis 2

S/N	Observed Variable (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
26	62	62.2	-0.2	0.04	0.00
27	70	38.4	31.6	998.56	26.00
28	1	2.2	-1.2	1.44	0.65
29	10	21.2	-11.2	125.44	5.92
30	8	27	-19	361	13.37
31	105	62.2	42.8	1831.84	29.45
32	25	38.4	-13.4	179.56	4.68
33	2	2.2	-0.2	0.04	0.02
34	14	21.2	-7.2	51.84	2.45
35	5	27	-22	484	17.93
36	25	62.2	-37.2	1383.84	22.25
37	11	38.4	-27.4	750.76	19.55
38	3	2.2	0.8	0.64	0.29
39	40	21.2	18.8	353.44	16.67
40	72	27	45	2025	75
41	30	62.2	-32.2	1036.84	16.67
42	41	38.4	2.6	6.76	0.18
43	4	2.2	1.8	3.24	1.47
44	35	21.2	13.8	190.44	8.98
45	41	27	14	196	7.26
46	89	62.2	26.8	718.24	11.55
47	45	38.4	6.6	43.56	1.13
48	1	2.2	-1.2	1.44	0.65
49	7	21.2	-14.2	201.64	9.51
50	9	27	-18	324	12
					303.63

Chi-square ² calculated = $\Sigma (O - E)^2$

Where O = Observed Frequency
 E = Expected Frequency
 Σ = Summation

Therefore, chi-square calculated (χ^2) = 303.63

Test techniques, chi-square tabulated (χ^2_t) (χ^2_v), α

Where: V = degree of freedom (r-1) (C-1)
 = (5-1) (5-1)
 = (4) (4) = 16

AND α = level of significance

α = at 5% = 0.05

$\chi^2_{16, 0.05} = 26.296$

(i) Decision rule: The decision rule is that, if the chi-square calculated (χ^2_c) is greater than chi-square tabulated (χ^2_t) then, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, otherwise accept the null hypothesis.

(ii) Decision: Since (χ^2_c (303.63), is greater than (χ^2_t (26.296) we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, thus conclude that the ratification of the protocol on free movement of persons, has significantly improved the movement of people between Nigeria and Benin republic at 5% level of significance.

4.3 Discussion of the Findings

4.3.1 ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, and its implication on movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic.

Economic Community of West African States' protocol on free movement of persons is one of the four formal steps designed to achieve a Custom Union. To make this a reality, member countries ought to adhere or comply with its provision by domesticating the tenet of this protocol in their national legislations. Nigeria and Benin Republic, the focal points of this study, have demonstrated compliance to the protocol on several critical issues, for instance, the issue of visa abolition as envisaged and actually being promulgated in ECOWAS Resolution A/Res.2/11/84, has Nigeria's Law in this regard which states that, all nationals of countries that are signatories to the ECOWAS treaty can enter Nigeria for 90 days with a valid national or ECOWAS travel certificate (www.immigration.gov.ng/ERC.htm).

At the other side of the coin, Benin republic has also shown some compliances with regard to those issues that are critical in the protocol. To start with, the visa-free travel of ECOWAS has a place in Benin's acts, which provides that travel documents are required for everyone except nationals of member countries of ECOWAS (<http://Benintourism.com/index.php/guide.pratique/documents-de-roy>).

Assemblage of all these areas of compliance with the protocol therefore, are supposed to have impact in the movement of people, residence and establishment, more so as it concerns Nigeria-Benin bilateral relations.

To this end, the result of this study reveals that, the issue of visa-free regime has aided movement of people between these countries, as unnecessary paper works with its attendant delay in time, cost incursion, is reduced. While ninety days it gives, enables community citizens to scout for potential business opportunities, or better still, look for payable job. One thing with visa is that, it is Subject to conditionalities and as such, it is greeted with disturbances, extortion, restriction and even outright expulsion in the event any of its requirements is abridged. Removal

<https://ebscoejer.org/>

of it therefore, gives citizens of member countries leverages to explore the opportunities available in their host countries unhindered.

Similarly, residence card established for ECOWAS member states meant to be in the format of 12cmx10cm, in the decision A/Dec/2/5/90; Article 1, 2, occupies a pride of place in the immigration act, 1963 No.6. L.N.9. In this act, condition for entry into Nigeria was given, to this end, any person that is not a citizen of Nigeria desirous of entering for the purpose of residence, shall unless exempted under this Acts, give security in such amount as the minister may prescribe and shall supply information as the Director of Immigration may reasonably require, and if the Director of Immigration is satisfied, he may issue a residence permit accordingly (USAID: 2010). As a fall-out of this, residence card is also provided in the protocol, so that one can stay beyond ninety days in a member country. Admit ably, Benin Republic's law in this regard could not be found, but personal observation during the researcher's tour to this country, indicates substantial compliance to the intent of the card, as Nigerians there, are doing their businesses and staying there as deemed fit by the exigencies of their businesses.

The effect ECOWAS residence card has is that, it gives Nigerians or Beninese opportunity to stay as they like (beyond 90 days). A visit to either of these countries reveals that some Nigerians are plying their trades in Cotonou. The market called Mrs. Eboh is almost occupied by Nigerians. Similar event is reported by Bio and Obi (2009) that Ebutero in Lagos is a warehouse centre for West African Countries. By reason of proximity, Benineses apart from Nigerians are the most utilizers. It is not just business centre but a residential area.

In Decision A/Dec.2/7/85, Travel Certificate or passport was inaugurated. In it, it was stated that, a travel document other than National passport known as the ECOWAS Travel Certificate in a format of booklet measuring, 12.5cm/8.5cm with a light blue card cover bearing the ECOWAS emblem, should be an admissible document for traveling within ECOWAS countries. By way of compliance, Nigeria has legislation that recognizes that, nationals of countries that are signatories to the ECOWAS Treaty qualify to apply for an ECOWAS travel certificate or passport, the later is expected to be in the form of official in a blue colour, and standard Nigeria passport with green cover (www.immigration.gov.ng).

Similarly, ECOWAS Travel Certificate or Passport is also in the wish-list of Benin Republic, as it is expected of custom agencies to check the identities of persons entering, exiting or moving within the customs territory (OTAL, Benin Tourism Article 56 in USAID 2011, p.36).

The effect therefore is that, while Residence card allows staying beyond ninety days, Travel Certificate or ECOWAS Passport, allows for only ninety days stay. The message Travel Certificate or ECOWAS passport carries is that, no-visa requirement on the part of ECOWAS members, does not translate to no travel documents, instead it means that, an ECOWAS document that is administrable and admissible in all member countries, reminiscent of multi-Schengen visa, obtainable in European Union countries is in vogue. And that all stringent conditions akin to visa, such as obtention of work permit or business permit as the case may be, which culminates into expatriate quota system, are virtually absent.

The implication of this while doing business in Nigeria is that, the rigor of going to Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) in order to be covered by the treatment and protection provisions of Nigeria's investment laws is not necessary. Instead, investment approval and licensing is governed by the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) and as such, any company doing business in Nigeria, could hire workers from anywhere (ECOWAS countries) without work permit or quota system, since they are in free zone.

As a corollary of these, the normal obtention of work permit or business permit, which culminates into expatriate quota system, is not in the relationship among ECOWAS countries and Benin Republic-Nigeria relations in particular.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

From the analyses made and hypotheses tested, one can deduce the following:

1. There is improvement in movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic, occasioned by ratification of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons, that is why citizens of these countries travel to each other's country with ECOWAS travelling documents, with only stamping needed at the point of entry and exit, without them being subjected to the rigour of records reminiscent of visa regime, which would have been time consuming.
2. The protocol has also brought Nigeria and Benin Republic together, thus they established community enterprises such as Onigbolo cement factory, S'uave Sugar Company and CEB-NEPA Power Interconnection Project. Their citizens use common ECOWAS passport and certificate for travelling. While the presence of Access-Diamond bank, Songhai farm and the like in Benin Republic, all of which Nigerian private firms, enjoying right of establishment of the protocol, also integrated both countries.

5.2 Conclusion

This study posits that the protocol has improved movement of people between Nigeria and Benin Republic, as envisioned in the first phase of the protocol (right of entry). However, this is not without hitches, as some immigration officials because of greediness feign ignorance that ECOWAS nationals holding valid documents such as passport or travel certificate supposed to enter and exit country freely, resulting in extortion and unnecessary molestation.

On the other hand, many West African citizens are oblivious of the protocol whereas others who are aware misunderstood, misinterpreted and mistook same for crossing ECOWAS member countries freely without an iota of relevant travel documents. This plays into the hands of both touts(klebe) and security personnels at the border post into demanding for a kick back.

On the second and third phases of the protocol, there are incompleteness in their implementations especially with the second phase (right of residence). These stem from impediments in securing residence and work permit, which is a natural consequence of lack of harmonization of domestic laws to be at par with the regional protocol. That is why seeking elective or appointive position by a Nigerian or Beninese in their country of residence not origin, is still elusive, even though the protocol under discourse, advocates same.

Nevertheless, the protocol achieved considerably the goal of integration it was meant to achieve, that is why Nigeria and Benin Republic have joint stakes in S'uave Sugar and Onigbolo Cement as community enterprises. In the same vein, private establishments by Nigerians such as Songhai farm, United Bank for Africa, Glo Mobile, operating in Benin Republic, all foster integration between the two countries.

5.3 Recommendations:

1. There should be more awareness creation on the existence of the protocol. This could be done through posting of written signs on immigration procedures at the border between Nigeria and Benin Republic using French and English Languages. In doing this, cognizance of those who

<https://ebscoejer.org/>

can't read and write should be taken, to communicate them using pictures. These when done will not only serve as a check to corrupt border manning agencies who sometimes feign ignorance of the protocol, but also will make community citizens not to fall prey to exploitation arising from ignorance of the working or actual existence of the protocol.

2. ECOWAS member states should harmonize their relevant domestic laws to be at par with that of ECOWAS, most importantly as it concerns provisos on free movement of persons. For instance, state of origin as a basis for socio-political engagements and enjoyments, should be replaced with state of residence. This when done, will guarantee equal enjoyment of rights of community citizen with that of nationals, thereby ensuring that inconsistencies and incompleteness in implementing right of establishment and residence, which are second and third phases of the protocol are reduced to the barest minimum.

REFERENCES

- Abok, S. A. (1995). The West African sub-region; History and limit of Collective Conflict Resolution, *Research project submitted to National War College (NWC) Abuja.*
- Adejowun, K. D. (2011). Regional Integration in Africa: The case of ECOWAS, *Continental Journal of Sustainable Development* 2(2), 6-13(Online: <http://www.wiloludjournal.com>).
- Adeniran, A. (2008). Informal Networking and social Identity Construction among Ejiḡbo in South West Nigeria and Ivory Coast. Ibadan: Department of Sociology University of Ibadan.
- Adeniran, A. (2012). Regional Integration in the ECOWAS Region: Challenges and Opportunities (online: www.africaportal.org/article/2012)
- Adepoju, A. (2013). Operationalising the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons: Prospects for Sub-Regional Trade and Development. Network of Migration Research on (NOMRA)
- Adepoju, A. (2005). Migration in West Africa: A paper prepared for the policy Analysis and research Programme of the Global commission on International Migration (online: www.gcim.org).
- Adepoju, A., Alister, B. and Mariah, L. (2007). Promoting integration through mobility: Free movement under ECOWAS (On-line: <http://www.wher.orx/491479c811.pdf>)
- Adetula, V. (2008). Impact of 'New' Global Trade Regimes on Regional Integration Processes South (Online: www.africaportal.org/aspaces/articles/impact-new-global-trade-regimes-retional-integration).
- African Union. (2009). *Status of Integration in Africa (SIA)* (on-line: [http://www.africa-union.org & root/Ha/conference](http://www.africa-union.org/root/Ha/conference)).
- <https://ebscoejer.org/>

Agyei, J. and Clottey, E. (2008). Operationalizing the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of People among the Member states. Issues of convergence and prospects for sub-regional integration (online: www.imi.ox.ac.uk/pdfs/.../CLOTTEY%20and%20AGYEI.pdf).

Ali, B. W. (2013). Impact of ECOWAS Protocols on Political and Economic Integration of West African Sub-Region. United Kingdom: European Centre for Research Training and Development. *International Journal of Physical and Human Geography* 1(2), 47-58, Online: www.ca-journals.org.

Ajireloja, J. (2023). How to determine sample size human-based study population. Online: <https://medium.com/@josephajire/how-to-determine-sample-size-for-human-based-study-population-a52a651407c8>.

Andrew Wasike and James Tasamba (2024). 3 Countries in West Africa's Sahel region quit ECOWAS bloc. online: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/3-countries-in-west-africas-sahel-region-quit-ecowas-bloc/3121361>.

Bio and Obi, C. (2001). Club Sahel: prospects for Trade between Nigeria and its Neighbours: France: OECD Publications.41p

Blueway, K, G. (1999). An ECOWAS Parliament: The way forward. *A Paper presented at a workshop organized jointly by the Legion Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Institutional Renewal Programme on Regionalism and Integration in West Africa*. Accra: Golden Tulip.

Bob, D and Sonja, N. (2011). Regional Integration and Free Movement across borders: the role social policy in enabling and preventing access to social entitlements by cross border movers. Europe and Southern Africa compared. *A Paper delivered at the RISC 2011 Conference; Hunters Rest Hotel Runstenburg*. 30th November,-3rd December 2011, (Online: http://www.ucrm.org/fileadmin/chair/RISC_Paper.pdf)

Carens, J. H. (1992). Migration and morality: A liberal egalitarian perspective. *In Mehmet Ugur (2013)*. London: University of Greenwich.2-27

CBN International Operations ECOWAS (Online: <http://www.centralbank.org/monetarypolicyecowas>)

Chinaka, O (2004). Unbanning Beninois Goods. *Daily Champion* (Lagos) 14th December, 2004 p.10.

Charmely, P. (1977). A note on the Concept of Integration on Paths and on the advantages of Integration *In Ali (2013) Impact of ECOWAS protocols on political and Economic integration of West African sub-Region* (online: www.ea-Journals.org).1-12.

Chibuzor N. (2005). Nigeria and ECOWAS *In Ogwu, J. (ed) New Horizons for Nigeria in Id Affairs*. Lagos: Nigeria Institute of International Affairs. 111 -149.
<https://ebscoejer.org/>

Debo, and Dele, A. (2003). Ports diversion; How Nigerian makes Billions for Benin, Togo. *man-Tribune* (Lagos), 29th August 2003. P.15.

Deinde, A. (1999). 40 Nigerian Bizman detained by Beninoise security agents. *Daily Times* , 11th October 1999 P.5.

Dipo, and Yinka, K. (2000). Business; High tariff threatens Nigeria-Benin Cross-border trade. Lagos; *Comet* (Lagos) 10 August 2000 P.15