

# The Politics of Trade Disputes in the Fourth Republic: The Case of Ghana and Nigeria

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## Abstract

The relationship between Ghana and Nigeria over the years can be described as oscillatory because of the occasional twist and turn. Notably, a trade dispute was one of the challenges that marred the relationship between the two countries. Historically, trade disputes emerged in the 1930s as a result of the cocoa hold-up crisis in 1932, and this led to the call by the National Crusade for the protection of Ghanaian enterprises to expel foreign traders, predominantly Nigerians. This phenomenon continued during Busia's regime, where he expelled a large number of Nigerian traders through the Aliens Compliance Order in 1969. Buhari's regime also responded in 1983-85 by expelling over one million Ghanaians from Nigeria for economic and trade reasons. In 2012, the government of Ghana employed a contingent economic policy that led to the closure of many Nigerian shops. Moreover, the closure of the Nigerian land borders on Ghana and other trading partners revived the trade tension between the two countries, where Ghanaians retaliated with other draconian policies. The intermittent trade disputes between the two countries triggered the quest of the researchers to assess the fundamental driving forces of the impasse, identify the politico-economic ramifications of the disputes on both countries and provide some recommendations to deal with the problem. Relevant related literature was reviewed thematically, and International Regime Theory was used to underpin the research. The study used a qualitative research approach to gather in-depth data from respondents through interviews and observations. Thematic analysis was used as an approach for data interpretation and discussion. The relevant literature and the findings revealed that the inconsistencies of ECOWAS protocols with the national trade policies, the use of protectionist economic policies such as the "prohibited goods" policy by Nigeria against Ghana, and the implementation of the GIPC Act 2013 (865), Nigeria's border closure, and lockdown of Nigerian retail shops in Ghana were some of the fundamental driving forces of the trade disputes between the countries in the fourth republic. Economically, the occasional trade disturbances led to the loss of capital and revenue for traders from both sides. Notwithstanding these challenges, there was an initiative by both governments to find a lasting solution to the menace. The research concluded with some recommendations for policy and praxis.

**Keywords:** Trade Dispute, ECOWAS Protocols, Traders Association, West Africa, Fourth Republic

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## 1. Introduction

The study of the relationship between countries constitutes an interesting field for international relations students, experts, and everyone interested in the dynamics of international politics. When analyzing interrelationships between sovereign states, the relationship between Ghana and Nigeria is an intriguing case study. Historically, these countries have gone through British colonialism (Otoghile & Obakhedo, 2011). Politically, both countries achieved independence after a long struggle for freedom. Some of the strategies used in achieving this goal include creating consistent awareness for citizens to demand total freedom from the colonial masters; using non-violent means of registering their plight through demonstrations and other agitations captured in self-determination; and, in this regard, the strong feeling of African brotherhood informed the nationalist movement to intensify their struggle for self-government (Olasupo, Oladeji, & Ijeoma, 2017). Ademola noted that both countries have encountered similar economic issues, such as widespread poverty coupled with misery, but due to trading connections, both countries enjoyed tremendous warmth and camaraderie within the ECOWAS sub-region (Ademola, 2016).

Politico-economic commonalities between Ghana and Nigeria epitomize the in-depth interconnectedness in terms of neighbor relations, even though both countries do not share geographical borders. Prima facie, the common characteristics of both countries should provide the basis for an individual to predict their consistent cooperation. Ironically, their interactions at some points in time defied logical prediction. Even though both countries are economic giants in the sub-region, their economic and trade relations have been topsy-turvy for some time now (Ademola, 2016). Over the years, the trade relationship between Ghana and Nigeria has faced dramatic twists and turns, and the two countries have intermittently adopted contingent protectionist policies that are detrimental to each other. The interrelationship between the two countries swings between cooperation, mutual

suspicion, and discord (Otoghile & Obakhedo, 2011).

Historically, the trade disputes between Ghana and Nigeria emerged in the nineteenth century when Nigerian traders migrated to Ghana for trade activities due to the boom in the cocoa, mining, and construction sectors. During the 1930s, the Ghanaian local business community formed a coalition known as the National Crusade for the Protection of Ghanaian Enterprises to oppose the prevalence of foreign traders in the country. The agitation of this organization led to the call for the expulsion of foreigners, predominantly Nigerian traders, from the country (Boahen, 1975; Newbury, 1971, cited by Aremu 2013). Olaniyi (2004) noted that a trade dispute ensued between Ghanaian traders and their foreign counterparts as a result of the cocoa hold-up crisis in 1932. This phenomenon continued during Busia's regime, when he expelled a large number of Nigerian traders through the Aliens Compliance Order in 1969. Buhari's regime also responded through the famous "Ghana must go policy" in 1983–85 by expelling over one million Ghanaians from Nigeria for economic and trade reasons. It was a period of great distress for Ghana since the country was on the verge of collapsing due to drought, famine, and economic downturns (Ademola, 2016).

A very recent development has to do with the closure of the Nigerian land border to Ghanaian and other West African traders in October 2019. This phenomenon triggered the use of the "tit for tat" strategy, which led to the closing of shops of Nigerian traders in Ghanaian markets by the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA). In the midst of this heightened situation between the two countries and the quest to find a plausible solution to the problem, the research seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What are the driving forces behind trade disputes between Ghana and Nigeria? (2) What are the economic effects of Ghana and Nigeria's trade disputes? (3) To what extent do trade disputes affect the two countries politically, and (4) how can trade disputes between Ghana and Nigeria be curbed?

Given the socio-political and economic relationship between these two giants in the West African sub-region and the desire to pursue their national interests, issues relating to trade disputes and their ramifications will inevitably emerge. Adopting protectionist economic policies and the threat of retaliation by a trading partner through a "tit-for-tat" policy invariably leads to trade disputes. This is the current status of relations between Ghana and Nigeria. Research in this area helped to identify the fundamental driving forces and the political and economic implications of trade disputes between these great nations as a result of policy incoherence and inconsistencies in ECOWAS protocols with those of individual member states. Issues relating to trade disputes between these countries have been surging in recent times. It is relevant to assess the driving forces behind these trade disputes, identify the effects of the disputes, and provide recommendations for eliminating these difficulties.

## 2. Previous Studies Leading to the Study

Political relations between Ghana and Nigeria can undoubtedly be described as a swinging relationship. This is because both countries, at some point in their political trajectory, developed cordiality on the one hand and mutual suspicion and discord on the other hand towards each other. There is a root of convergence and a point of departure when exploring the political relationship between these two countries. The root of political convergence between Ghana and Nigeria is their colonial history. Aluko (1977) asserted that the political relationship between Ghana and Nigeria is a case study of disintegration and disengagement since both countries shared some characteristics under British colonial rule, but since their independence, their political ideologies and national interests have generated conflictual and even dialectical stances. Their relationship was seen as a source of discord, not integration.

Otoghile & Obakhedo (2011) stated that since their independence, the various political administrations have experienced instances of suspicion, jealousy, and strife. Regardless of the commonalities in terms of political economy and intermittent military intervention in their respective democracies, their mutual attitude has been more one of competition than cooperation. The root of political convergence between Ghana and Nigeria is their colonial history (Aluko, 1977). Trade disputes between Ghana and Nigeria were not a fourth republican phenomenon but had their genesis in the 19th century when Nigerian traders migrated to Ghana for trade activities due to the boom in the cocoa and mining sectors. Boahen (1975) and Newbury (1971), cited by Aremu (2013), confirmed that the first relationship between the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Nigeria was trading. Because gold and cocoa commanded a large market during this period, the Ghanaian economy became a trading center for most Nigerian emigrant traders.

Trade disputes between Ghana and Nigeria continued even in their fourth republics. However, the earlier part of their fourth republic was partly cordial in terms of trade relations. Nevertheless, in 2005, President Obasanjo imposed an embargo on some 96 Ghanaian products imported into Nigeria. These products include textiles, garments, starch, plastics, canned foods, and other agricultural products. Even though these products were registered under the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), the Nigerian government implemented this unfavorable policy to protect its economic interests. According to Ademola (2016), successive governments, including President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, implemented this policy, and this generated a trade dispute between the two economies since Ghanaian businesswomen in Nigeria were virtually thrown out of

business.

Actual trade disputes in the Fourth Republic on the part of Ghana were palpable during the tenure of President Evans Atta Mills. Otoghile & Obakhedo (2011) stated that the implementation of the new Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) Act 2013 (865) that raised the amount of money for the registration of foreign businesses to \$1,000,000 the employment of at least ten (10) Ghanaian citizens in foreign businesses, the restriction of foreign traders from engaging in some specific ventures, including retailing, and the lockdown of foreign shops, most of which were Nigerians, just because they were not complying with the new GIPC protocol were the underlining factors for the initial trade dispute between both countries.

Given the economic downturn in Nigeria from 2014 through 2018 due to the fall in global oil prices, the Buhari administration intends to implement stringent economic policies to restructure the economy. The government saw the need to focus on the agriculture sector as a means for economic recovery and growth plans. In this regard, the plan to discourage the importation of food and other products from neighboring countries became very necessary, and hence it was in the national interest of Nigeria to precipitate the border closure as a protectionist mechanism for domestic farmers against the cheap import of foodstuffs (Liedong, 2019).

Niba (2019) stated that members of the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA), in November 2019, stormed major market centers in Accra and closed down over one hundred (100) shops belonging to foreigners, most especially Nigerians. Those targeted were purportedly violating the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) Act. Meanwhile, according to Niba (2019), experts perceived the move as retaliation for the closure of Nigerian borders on August 21st, 2019. Ghana's Union of Traders Association claimed that about one hundred (100) trucks loaded with Ghanaian products got stuck at the border due to Nigeria's border closure.

Assessing trade relations between these two great economies in West Africa in recent times brings to the fore the bumpy nature of such retaliation on account of a lack of cooperation or compromise on knotty issues. However, there was the establishment of the Ghana-Nigeria Business Council, backed by legislation on both sides that will permit Ghana and Nigeria to have a coded statute that will guide business activities and trade relations in the future (Dapatem, 2020). Based on several diplomatic negotiations and other forms of dispute resolution mechanisms, on the 16th of December 2020, Nigeria announced the reopening of its land borders for normal business to take place (Millecamp, 2021).

In this fourth republic, trade disputes between Ghana and Nigeria were noticeable. One of the reasons for this situation may be the increasing nature of traders from both markets, especially Nigerians. The spillover effect of the Nigerian trading population has placed undue pressure on the Ghanaian business community. The literature so far shows that there were numerous slits in existing legislation for illegal traders on both sides to exploit, and hence there was a need to provide a one-time solution to curb this problem.

### *2.1 Theoretical Framework*

International Regime Theory was used to provide a theoretical foundation for the research. International Regime Theory is defined as a collection of implicit or explicit norms, principles, rules, regulations, and decision-making processes and procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of relations at the international level (Krasner, 1983). Bradford (2007) noted that the post-World War Two (WW2) era was marked by a new breed of scholars focusing on international organizations, and by the 1970s, international relations scholars (including Gerard Ruggie, Krasner, Nye, and Keohen) generally turned to the study of international regimes with the aim of analyzing international cooperation and governance.

Verbeek (2011) asserted that the dissatisfaction with classical realism as a result of ignoring the activities of non-state actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), transnational corporations (TNCs), and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), in the global economy has led to the search for an alternative theory that can respond to the modern trend of relationships that exist between countries at the international level. This phenomenon stimulated the origination of international regimes by John Gerard Ruggie in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Verbeek, 2011). According to Haggard and Simmons (1987), the theory burst forth from dissatisfaction because of the dominance of the international order and a sharp opposition between the zero-sum, competitive "anarchy" in the international system and the cooperative behavior of industrialized states.

The growing interdependence of states has resulted in a new type of organization and coordination that does not easily fit into the realist paradigm. The roots of regime theory have traditionally been found in the Liberal-Realist school of thought. In this regard, Keeley (1990) proposed that both resistance and cooperation among actors in the international system existed and could exist. To incorporate neoliberal and political realist positions into international relations, regime theorists assumed that state actions are influenced by norms and principles, but that these principles are guided by behaviors related to the pursuit of national interests (Haggard & Simmons, 1987). Given these, it is plausible to argue that International Regime Theory arose to explain the complexities of international actor relationships that realist and liberal theories could not adequately expound.

This theory helps to explain and provide an understanding of how regimes shape the actions of states to pursue policies that benefit their national interests. The assumptions of the theory, including the regard for states as

rational and principal actors in the international realm, the influence of the realist orientation regarding the self-centeredness and egoistic nature of states concerning others, the assumption that states are not always conflictual since international relations is not a zero-sum game where the benefit of one state leads to the detriment of another state, the sense of common interests in the international domain, and the essentiality of interdependences among international actors, further explain the interconnections of nations in achieving their national interests. The theory explains why states like Ghana and Nigeria develop contingent economic policies toward each other irrespective of international regulations governing their trade systems.

The International Regime Theory helped in understanding the trade disputes and their implications between Ghana and Nigeria. The theory serves as a framework that helps to explain the issue and provide policy recommendations for mitigating the intermittent trade disturbances due to the laid down rules and norms that serve as a standard of operation in the process of interaction among actors between the two countries. As Bradford indicated, the theory helps us understand cooperation between states and other concerned actors at the international level (Bradford, 2007). Understanding the benefits of cooperation at the international level would help Ghana and Nigeria work collectively to achieve their goals without hurting each other.

### 3. Methodology

A case study research design coupled with qualitative research approaches was employed for this study, and constructivism as the philosophical worldview underpinned the research. The use of a case study approach to creating discoveries in social science and other relevant disciplines of inquiry was emphasized by scholars such as Yin (2003), Stake (1998), Baxter and Jack (2008), Gerring (2004), Jensen and Rogers (2001), and McNabb (2002). A case study, according to Yin (2003), offers several opportunities to respond to questions about the topic of study in a variety of ways. Furthermore, the approach encourages a more thorough examination of cause-and-effect connections. According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative approach entails investigating and comprehending the issues confronting individuals and groups in our human society. This approach deals with the collection of data from the participant's setting, analyzing the data inductively from specific to general themes, making an interpretation of the meaning from the collected data, and reporting on the outcomes of the research.

There was the use of primary and secondary data obtained through semi-structured interviews with purposefully selected respondents and experts whose backgrounds are related to the study. The primary data was collected from the population, including the officials from the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA), the Nigeria Union of Traders Association (NUTA), the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC), and Ghanaian and Nigerian traders in Accra. The study sampled thirty (30) respondents. The breakdown of the sample was four (4) officials from each office (GUTA, NUTA), and two (2) officials from GIPC. Ten (10) traders from each country (Ghana and Nigeria) were also selected. From each group, four females and six males have been in the retail business for more than ten (10) years.

These respondents were selected because they were considered to have first-hand information due to the practical experience they had regarding the Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes. For instance, GUTA and NUTA have been battling over the legitimacy of the trading activities of foreigners in the Ghanaian markets. Furthermore, GIPC was chosen due to their Act 2013 (Act 865) governing the minimum capital investment policy that governs the operation of foreign businesses in Ghana. Ordinary Nigerian and Ghanaian retail traders were considered because they are directly affected by the trade dispute. Automobile spare parts dealers, technological gadget and accessory dealers, and electronics dealers were chosen from this category. For example, the closing of Nigerian shops in Ghana and the closure of Nigerian land borders were factors for consideration. On the other hand, secondary sources include relevant official documents from articles, annual reports, books, magazines, and other credible internet sources. The Balme Library and the Political Science Department Library at the University of Ghana, Legon were the primary sources of secondary data. The data collected from this sample size was enough to reach a saturation point, and the data collected was adequate for gaining a greater understanding of the factors leading to Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes.

### 4. Research Results

The study highlighted a number of numerous relevant findings in relation to the research questions in determining the fundamental driving forces for Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes, the economic effects of Ghana and Nigeria's trade disputes, the extent to which trade disputes affect the two countries politically, and how Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes can be curtailed. Based on the literature and data gathered, it was revealed that trade disputes between Ghana and Nigeria were not a novelty. The tension started during the pre-independence era, continued post-independence, and is still lingering in their fourth republic. Olaniyi (2004) vividly noted that a trade dispute ensued between Ghanaian traders and their Nigerian counterparts in the 1930s when there was a cocoa hold-up crisis. During the 1930s, the Ghanaian local business community formed a coalition known as the National Crusade for the Protection of Ghanaian Enterprises to oppose the prevalence of foreign traders in the country. The agitation of this organization led to the call for the expulsion of foreigners, predominantly Nigerian traders, from the country.

Regarding the first objective, to assess the fundamental driving forces of Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes, the study discovered the inconsistencies of ECOWAS protocols with national trade policies as one of the major factors in the occasional trade disputes. For example, Article 2 of the 1999 ECOWAS Compendium on Free Movement, Right of Residence, and Establishment states that

"To implement the right of residence under the protocol on the free movement of persons, the right of residence, and the establishment, each Member State shall grant to citizens of the ECOWAS community the right of residence within the territory to seek and carry out income-earning employment" (ECOWAS, 1999).

Based on the above provision, the Nigeria Union of Traders Association Ghana (NUTAG) continues to justify their legitimacy for residing and engaging in trading activities in Ghana. According to the president of the Nigerian Union of Traders Association Ghana (NUTAG),

The ECOWAS protocol on the movement of people, goods, and services permits foreigners, including Nigerians, to freely engage in trading activities in any member state. However, Ghanaian authorities still locked up Nigerian shops and prevented them from engaging in their trading activities in Ghana. The laws governing foreign trade in Ghana contradict the ECOWAS treaties and protocols (Arbiterz, 2020).

According to Niba (2019), non-nationals in Ghana are prohibited from engaging in domestic retail trade. This policy was established by the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC Act 2013, 865), to protect the interests of Ghanaian traders engaging in retail space.

The general secretary of the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA) pointed out that Nigerian traders failed to comply with the GIPC Act 2013 (865) and the ninety (90) day ultimatum granted by ECOWAS allowing foreigners to bring their manufactured goods to Ghana, distribute those goods, take their money, and return to their country. Referring to Article 3 of the 1999 ECOWAS Convention, he stated that an ECOWAS citizen has the right to visit Ghana for ninety (90) days through an official entry point without a visa. After this period, the visitor must seek permission from the appropriate authorities if he or she needs an extension of stay. The general secretary vividly pointed out that

"The root cause of the problem was the fact that the Nigerian traders came to our markets with their goods, distributed parts of their products, and stayed in the country to engage in retail trade of their remaining goods." Due to this, there was a serious proliferation of Nigerian traders in the country "(general secretary of GUTA, April 27, 2021, interview, Accra).

Regarding the second objective of ascertaining the economic effects of Ghana and Nigeria's trade disputes, the research revealed that the trade disputes led to a decline in economic cooperation between the two parties. Scholars such as Ademola (2016) posited that, given the current rocky trade relationship between Ghana and Nigeria, no economic and trade integration can be achieved if trade issues are not resolved. Ayeni (2020) submitted that trade relations between both countries indicated that relations are stained, and their actions are drawing them further away from cooperation. In response to this position, the general secretary of GUTA stated that,

"You cannot expect economic cooperation between both countries to be smooth if the Nigerian government imposed an embargo on some Ghanaian products under the policy of prohibited items." How do we expect our relationship to increase if they close their borders after seeing the deterioration of Ghanaian products on their borders? Indeed, all is not well with us because we are also not going to sit down and allow their citizens to destroy our retail markets in Ghana. " (GUTA general secretary) on April 27, 2021 (field interview in Accra).

With regards to the third objective of determining the extent to which trade disputes affect the two countries politically, the study revealed that Ghana's relations with Nigerian traders in Ghanaian markets triggered a political reaction from some Nigerian leaders, where they advocated for retaliatory and "tit for tat" diplomacy because of the implementation of neck-breaking trade policies and the closure of Nigerian retail shops in the major trading centers in Ghana. According to Oxford Business Group (2012).

"The evidence indicated through the closure of Nigerian retail shops has adversely impacted the existence of Nigerians in Ghanaian markets, and this crackdown heightens the tensions between the two countries, where some Nigerian politicians are calling on their government to sever diplomatic ties with Ghana as a retaliatory measure to deal with the issue."

It was further revealed that political actors from both countries tried their best to deal with the issue diplomatically. Nonetheless, authorities from both countries stated their commitment to protecting the long-standing cordial relationship between the two countries. To a larger extent, it could be said that Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes do not seriously affect political relations between the two countries. This is because leaders from both countries usually make a conscious effort to prevent an escalation of trade disputes and their effect on their political relations. Once there was a misunderstanding between traders on both sides and the tendency for the misunderstanding to degenerate into weightier situations, the governments of the two countries developed diplomatic means of resolving the issues.

In terms of measures to reduce trade disputes between the two countries, Hoppe (2014, 18), as cited by Mustapha (2021), stated that in order to avoid occasional disagreements between the two parties, both countries' trade and investment policies must go through a procedural and legal review in order to comply with ECOWAS

protocols and conventions. The research has discovered that Ghana Investment Promotion Center policies, which formed the basis for the trade disputes, are currently under review to address trade and investment challenges, especially the difficulties that might be encountered in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The research identified the lack of knowledge by foreigners (Nigerian traders) regarding Ghana's trade policies before entering the Ghanaian market for business. All the respondents from the Nigerian traders indicated that they are oblivious to the GIPC policies that prevent foreigners from engaging in some trading activities; for that matter, they started their businesses before they became aware of these national trade policies. Some of them claimed that the GIPC policies were formulated after Ghana became aware of the proliferation of Nigerian traders in the Ghanaian markets.

Generally, the data and literature accentuate the fact that Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes in the fourth republic were a result of the disparities in national trade policies and ECOWAS protocols, especially Article Two (2) of the 1999 ECOWAS compendium on free movement, right of residence, and establishment in a member country, which foreigners rely on to defend their legitimacy in residing and doing business in Ghana. Meanwhile, Ghanaian authorities, including GUTA and GIPC, referred to Article 3 of the 1999 ECOWAS Convention, which provided a ninety (90) day ultimatum to foreigners who wanted to trade in Ghana. With regard to disparities in sub-regional protocols and national trade policies, empirical data gathered from experts from GUTA and GIPC and reports from government officials and literature, including Jouanjean & Engel (2015) and Hoppe & Aidoo (2012), revealed that Ghana's trade policies, especially GIPC laws, are in sharp contrast with the ECOWAS protocol on the movement of people, goods, and services. While the ECOWAS protocol permitted members of the community to freely trade in member countries, the Ghana Investment Promotion Center laws demand that members of the sub-region can only trade in Ghana if they have a minimum capital investment of one million US dollars. It was also revealed that the trade disputes led to a decline in economic cooperation between the two parties. The closure of Nigeria's land borders and the locking up of Nigerian traders' retail shops in Ghana exacerbated the situation. Politically, there was strong advocacy between the two countries to compromise on some trade policies and deal with the situation diplomatically. Finally, the data revealed that trade policies are currently under review to accommodate the concerns of traders and ensure harmonization of economic and trade activities between the two countries.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined the politics of trade disputes in the Fourth Republic between Ghana and Nigeria. The literature and the empirical data revealed that Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes were not new phenomena. The protectionist agenda of both countries to safeguard their economic and national interests regardless of their neighbors continued to hurt trade relations between the two countries. It was also discovered that the inability of Nigerian traders in Ghana to abide by the GIPC Act 2013 (865) normally leads to the intermittent closure of Nigerian retail shops in major trading centers in Ghana. The Nigerian government's policy of "prohibited goods" against Ghanaian traders in Nigerian markets also formed another fundamental driving force for the intermittent trade disputes. To deal with the 25-year-old retail trade impasse between Ghana and Nigeria, the Speaker of Ghana's seventh (7th) parliament of the fourth republic, Rt. Hon. Alban Kingsford Bagbin, announced that the GIPC Act would be reviewed to exempt Nigeria from the \$1 million minimum capital requirement under the GIPC Act 2013 (865). In the same vein, the Speaker called for a review of Nigerian policy banning the importation of some Ghanaian products into Nigerian markets (Kumatsey, 2021).

The research recommends that the best way to deal with Ghana-Nigeria trade disputes is to create a balance between national trade policies and ECOWAS protocols on the free movement of people, goods, and services. Moreover, both countries must try as much as possible to avoid contingency economic policies that are detrimental to trading partners. Also, the joint ministerial committee and the established Ghana-Nigeria Business Council must intensify diplomatic efforts to see to the end of the occasional trade disputes. Furthermore, given the issues surrounding foreigners' knowledge of Ghana's trade policies, the research proposed intensive education and awareness creation of Ghana's trade policy guidelines at various points of entry to mitigate challenges. While it is important to educate foreigners entering Ghana, it is also very necessary to ensure that measures are put in place to discourage illegal entry into the country through porous routes. Finally, both countries need to expedite the review of trade policies, as proposed by the Speaker of Ghana's Parliament and to use legal and diplomatic means to deal with the issues.

The study was conducted during the period when COVID-19 situations were heightened in Ghana, and some respondents were cautious about engaging in an in-person conversation. Moreover, there were not enough resources to facilitate travel to Nigeria for data collection. However, the quality of the data gathered was considered sufficient, and these limitations did not appear to compromise the value of the research.

Undoubtedly, the study provided some answers to the questions regarding the fundamental forces that trigger trade disputes between the two countries. The inconsistencies between sub-regional trade policies and individual national policies and the quest for both countries to achieve their economic interests regardless of other trading

partners form one of the basic factors in the dispute. Economically, the intermittent disputes created tension between both countries, but interestingly, each situation never generated an intractable conflict. Regardless of what happens, governments on both sides work to lower the stakes for their dissatisfied citizens.

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