

Abstract

The East African Community (EAC) is a regional integration initiative of East African countries, including Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan, Burundi and Rwanda. The EAC is struggling to achieve a fully functional common market. This research investigated political leadership as an impediment to the region's trade advancement using interpretative phenomenology. The research interviewed selected individuals from the member state governments, regional trade bodies and private sector practitioners across the region. The findings posit that poor political leadership is a major challenge affecting common market implementation. The research proposes relooking the EAC decision-making model reconciliation, a sanction mechanism, political will and commitment, re-evaluating the principle of variable geometry, financial solidarity, member states contributions, independence of EAC institutions, anticorruption and EAC visioning as major solutions towards common market implementation. The study recommends further research on how the solutions can be implemented for the benefit of the region.