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INTERAGENCY FRAGMENTATION AND BORDER SECURITY PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed interagency fragmentation and border security performance in Nigeria by focusing on detection efficiency, trade facilitation, and revenue protection within an integrated risk management framework. A qualitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among personnel of the Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, Standards Organisation of Nigeria, and Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service. Of the 250 questionnaires distributed through stratified random sampling, 228 valid responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression. Based on the findings, the respondents reported high levels of information-sharing deficiency, operational duplication, and coordination gaps, while the three performance dimensions remained moderate. Fragmentation dimensions were negatively associated with performance, and the regression model explained 61.0% of its variance ($R = 0.781$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.598$; $F = 58.443$; $p < 0.001$). Coordination gaps were the strongest negative predictor ($\beta = -0.387$), followed by information-sharing deficiency ($\beta = -0.312$) and operational duplication ($\beta = -0.241$). Integrated risk management positively predicted performance ($\beta = 0.296$). The findings show that, institutional integration is an operational necessity rather than a purely administrative reform. Based on the findings, it was suggested that, Nigeria should establish interoperable border information systems, common risk-assessment standards, permanent coordination mechanisms, joint inspections, and clearer mandates. These measures would improve threat detection, reduce clearance delays, and strengthen customs compliance and revenue protection.

Keywords:

Border security, Fragmentation, Integrated, Interagency, Risk management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Border security has become one of the most significant policy concerns for governments across the world due to the increasing complexity of transnational threats, expanding international trade, and the rapid movement of people and goods across national boundaries. Contemporary border governance extends beyond the traditional responsibility of territorial protection to encompass customs administration, migration management, public health surveillance, environmental protection, trade facilitation, and national security. As borders become more complex operational environments, governments increasingly rely on risk management

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approaches to balance security imperatives with the need to facilitate legitimate trade and travel. Effective risk management enables border agencies to identify, assess, and respond to threats while minimizing disruptions to lawful economic activities (World Customs Organization (WCO, 2024).

Recent developments in global border governance have highlighted the importance of integrated risk management as a mechanism for improving border security performance. By means of definition, integrated risk management refers to a coordinated approach through which multiple agencies share information, harmonize risk assessment procedures, and collaborate in identifying and mitigating threats. The approach is founded on the recognition that no single agency possesses sufficient information or operational capacity to address the diverse risks associated with cross-border movements. Consequently, effective border governance increasingly depends on institutional cooperation, interoperable information systems, and intelligence-driven decision-making that support coordinated responses to emerging threats (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2023).

The growing adoption of integrated risk management stems from the limitations of traditional border control systems that relied heavily on routine inspections and fragmented enforcement practices. Such approaches often resulted in administrative delays, duplication of regulatory activities, inefficient allocation of resources, and reduced effectiveness in detecting illicit activities. International experience demonstrates that risk-based border management systems improve operational efficiency by directing enforcement resources toward high-risk consignments, travellers, and transactions while facilitating the smooth movement of legitimate trade. This dual objective has become particularly important as countries seek to strengthen security while maintaining competitiveness in an increasingly interconnected global economy (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022; WCO, 2024).

Nigeria is an important case because its extensive land and maritime frontiers connect major West African trade and mobility corridors while exposing the country to smuggling, trafficking, irregular migration, customs fraud, and unsafe or substandard products. Current Nigerian border-governance initiatives supported by the international organization for migration explicitly emphasize integrated border management, institutional capacity, border-management information systems, and cooperation among immigration, customs, security, health, and anti-trafficking bodies. Yet the national architecture remains distributed across agencies with distinct statutory mandates, databases, procedures, and organizational cultures.

Meanwhile, fragmentation can undermine performance through three pathways. First, information-sharing deficiencies deprive agencies of complete and timely intelligence. Second, operational duplication subjects the same movement to repeated checks, raising costs and clearance times. Third, coordination gaps produce inconsistent priorities and weak collective responses. International trade-facilitation practice identifies complex procedures, inefficient logistics, outdated infrastructure, and weak border coordination as major constraints that slow trade and increase costs, particularly in developing countries. These mechanisms suggest that, fragmentation may simultaneously weaken detection, trade facilitation, and revenue protection.

Although Nigerian scholarship has addressed customs reform, porous borders, trade facilitation, and security threats, comparatively little empirical work isolates the effects of interagency fragmentation across several border institutions and multiple performance

outcomes. This paper addresses that gap by answering the questions, to what extent do information-sharing deficiency, operational duplication, and coordination gaps predict border security performance and does integrated risk management improve performance?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Integrated Risk Management

Integrated risk management has emerged as one of the most important approaches to modern border governance because of the increasing complexity of threats associated with cross border movements. Traditional border management systems often relied on separate agencies performing independent inspections and risk assessments based on their individual mandates. While this approach may address specific regulatory concerns, it frequently creates operational inefficiencies, duplication of functions, fragmented intelligence, and inconsistent enforcement outcomes. Integrated risk management seeks to overcome these limitations by promoting collaboration among border agencies through shared information, coordinated decision making, and harmonized risk assessment procedures (Grainger, 2022).

Integrated risk management provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing border security performance through coordinated risk assessment, intelligence integration, information sharing, and joint enforcement activities. Its successful implementation can improve detection efficiency, facilitate legitimate trade, and strengthen revenue protection. As border environments become increasingly complex, integrated risk management continues to serve as a critical mechanism for promoting effective and sustainable border governance.

According to Widdowson (2023), integrated risk management improves decision quality by enabling agencies to access broader intelligence resources and develop a comprehensive understanding of emerging threats.

Recent developments in international border governance have strengthened the adoption of integrated risk management systems. Governments increasingly recognize that fragmented enforcement structures reduce operational effectiveness and create vulnerabilities that can be exploited by criminal networks. Consequently, many countries have introduced integrated border management reforms that encourage agencies to share intelligence, harmonize procedures, and coordinate inspections. Grainger (2024) argues that successful border modernization depends not only on technological investments but also on institutional arrangements that support collaborative risk management across agencies.

One of the defining features of integrated risk management is information sharing. Effective risk management depends on the availability of accurate, timely, and relevant information. Border agencies generate large volumes of data through customs declarations, immigration records, cargo manifests, surveillance systems, intelligence reports, and inspection outcomes. When this information remains isolated within individual agencies, the overall effectiveness of border governance is reduced. Integrated risk management encourages the development of shared databases and interoperable information systems that enable agencies to access and utilize common intelligence resources. According to McLinden et al. (2021), information sharing significantly improves the ability of border authorities to detect suspicious activities and respond proactively to emerging threats.

Intelligence integration represents another important component of integrated risk management. Widdowson (2021) notes that intelligence integration enhances enforcement effectiveness by enabling authorities to focus resources on high-risk targets while facilitating the movement of legitimate trade and travelers.

Joint risk assessment is also a fundamental element of integrated risk management. Risk assessment involves evaluating the likelihood and potential consequences of identified threats. Karklina Admine (2024) observes that, harmonized risk assessment procedures improve consistency, reduce duplication, and strengthen institutional coordination across border agencies.

Technological infrastructure plays a significant role in supporting integrated risk management systems. Advances in digital technology have enabled governments to develop electronic platforms that facilitate information exchange and coordinated decision making. National Single Window systems, automated targeting tools, cargo scanning technologies, and integrated databases have become essential components of contemporary border management. Holloway and Rae (2022) contend that, technology driven integration improves operational efficiency and enhances the ability of agencies to identify high risk transactions.

The effectiveness of integrated risk management is often reflected in improved border security performance. Furthermore, coordinated risk management strengthens revenue protection by improving compliance monitoring and reducing opportunities for customs fraud and smuggling (Polner & Grainger, 2023).

Despite its advantages, the implementation of integrated risk management remains challenging in many developing countries. Institutional resistance, inadequate technological infrastructure, legal barriers, and limited information sharing often hinder effective integration. In Nigeria, border management responsibilities are distributed among several agencies with different mandates, operational procedures, and information systems. This institutional fragmentation limits the development of unified risk management frameworks and reduces the effectiveness of coordinated enforcement efforts. Udeh and Nwokorobia (2022) argue that, strengthening integrated risk management in Nigeria requires reforms that promote interoperability, intelligence sharing, and collaborative decision making among border agencies.

From a governance perspective, integrated risk management represents a shift from isolated enforcement activities toward a system based on cooperation, shared responsibility, and collective problem solving. The approach recognizes that, modern border threats are interconnected and require coordinated institutional responses. Haruna (2024) emphasized that, integrated risk management is essential for improving border security outcomes because it enables agencies to combine resources, expertise, and intelligence in pursuit of common objectives.

2.2 Interagency Fragmentation

Interagency fragmentation refers to a situation in which multiple government agencies responsible for achieving related objectives operate independently with limited coordination, information sharing, and policy integration. Within the context of border security, fragmentation occurs when agencies involved in customs administration, immigration control, public health regulation, environmental protection, and law enforcement perform their

functions through separate operational systems and decision-making processes. Although these agencies pursue common border management goals, the absence of effective coordination often creates inefficiencies that undermine overall performance (Nosiri & Ohazurike, 2023).

One major characteristic of interagency fragmentation is the existence of separate information systems. Border agencies often maintain independent databases, intelligence platforms, and record management systems that limit the exchange of critical information. The absence of interoperable systems prevents agencies from developing a common understanding of risks and weakens collective decision making. McLinden et al. (2021) argued that, fragmented information systems reduce the effectiveness of risk assessment because agencies are unable to access comprehensive intelligence required for accurate threat identification.

Another important dimension of fragmentation is operational duplication. In many border environments, different agencies conduct separate inspections, documentation checks, and verification procedures on the same consignment or traveler. Such duplication increases administrative costs, prolongs clearance times, and creates unnecessary burdens for legitimate traders. Polner and Grainger (2023) observed that, duplicated border procedures often reduce operational efficiency and hinder trade facilitation objectives.

Interagency fragmentation also contributes to coordination gaps that affect enforcement effectiveness. Effective border governance requires agencies to align their activities through joint planning, intelligence sharing, and coordinated inspections. Where coordination mechanisms are weak or absent, agencies may pursue different priorities and apply inconsistent enforcement standards. According to Udeh and Nwokorobia (2022), weak institutional coordination remains one of the major obstacles to effective border management in many developing countries, including Nigeria.

Interagency fragmentation also affects trade facilitation and revenue protection. Delays resulting from multiple inspections and disconnected procedures increase transaction costs and reduce the efficiency of cross border trade. At the same time, weak coordination creates opportunities for smuggling, undervaluation, and customs fraud, which can reduce government revenue. Haruna (2024) maintains that addressing institutional fragmentation is essential for improving border security performance and achieving the broader objectives of integrated risk management.

In sum, interagency fragmentation remains a significant challenge to effective border governance. Its effects are reflected in reduced detection efficiency, slower trade processes, and weaker revenue protection outcomes. Understanding the nature and implications of fragmentation is therefore important for developing integrated risk management systems capable of enhancing border security performance in Nigeria.

2.3 Border Security Performance

Border security performance refers to the extent to which border management institutions achieve their security, regulatory, and economic objectives through effective control of cross border movements. In contemporary border governance, performance is no longer measured solely by the volume of inspections conducted or the number of personnel deployed at border posts. Rather, emphasis is placed on outcomes such as the ability to detect and prevent illicit activities, facilitate legitimate trade and travel, and protect government revenue. These

outcomes reflect the effectiveness of risk management systems, institutional coordination, and operational efficiency within the border environment (Grainger, 2024).

Detection efficiency is a critical indicator of border security performance. It refers to the ability of border agencies to identify, intercept, and prevent illegal activities while minimizing unnecessary interventions on legitimate movements. Effective detection systems rely on intelligence gathering, risk analysis, information sharing, and coordinated enforcement actions. Widdowson (2023) argues that, detection efficiency improves when agencies adopt intelligence driven approaches that enable them to focus resources on high-risk consignments and individuals. In contrast, fragmented institutional arrangements often limit access to relevant intelligence, thereby reducing the ability of agencies to identify emerging threats. Enhanced detection efficiency contributes to national security by reducing the movement of illicit goods, unauthorized persons, weapons, and other prohibited items across national borders.

Trade facilitation constitutes another important dimension of border security performance. Trade facilitation refers to the simplification, harmonization, and modernization of procedures governing the movement of goods across international borders. Efficient border procedures reduce transaction costs, shorten clearance times, and improve the predictability of international trade operations. According to Polner and Grainger (2023), modern border management systems must achieve an appropriate balance between regulatory control and trade efficiency. Excessive inspections, duplicated procedures, and poor interagency coordination often create delays that undermine economic competitiveness. Integrated risk management contributes to trade facilitation by enabling authorities to focus controls on high-risk activities while allowing low risk transactions to proceed with minimal disruption.

Revenue protection represents a third key indicator of border security performance. Customs administrations play a significant role in generating government revenue through the collection of duties, taxes, and other border related charges. Effective revenue protection requires the ability to detect customs fraud, smuggling, undervaluation, misclassification, and other forms of noncompliance. McLinden et al. (2021) note that risk-based border management systems improve compliance monitoring by enabling authorities to identify suspicious transactions and allocate enforcement resources strategically. Weak institutional coordination and fragmented information systems often create opportunities for revenue leakages, thereby reducing the effectiveness of customs administration and limiting public sector revenue generation.

The relationship among detection efficiency, trade facilitation, and revenue protection highlights the multidimensional nature of border security performance. Improvements in one dimension often influence outcomes in the others. For example, effective intelligence sharing may enhance detection capabilities while simultaneously reducing unnecessary inspections that delay legitimate trade. Similarly, improved compliance monitoring may strengthen revenue collection while contributing to broader security objectives. Haruna (2024) emphasized that, successful border governance requires an integrated approach that recognizes the interconnected nature of security, economic, and regulatory outcomes.

In Nigeria, achieving high levels of border security performance remains a significant challenge due to institutional fragmentation, technological limitations, and coordination gaps among border agencies. These challenges affect the ability of authorities to detect illicit activities, facilitate legitimate trade, and protect government revenue effectively. Consequently, strengthening integrated risk management and reducing interagency fragmentation have

become important priorities for improving overall border security performance. Understanding these performance dimensions provides a foundation for assessing how fragmented institutional arrangements influence border governance outcomes in Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The target population comprised operational, supervisory, and management personnel of five Nigerian border-management agencies: the Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, Standards Organisation of Nigeria, and Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service. Stratified random sampling was used to select 250 respondents according to agency representation and direct involvement in border operations, risk assessment, intelligence, or regulatory enforcement. A total of 228 valid questionnaires were returned, yielding a 91.2% response rate.

The structured questionnaire measured interagency fragmentation through information-sharing deficiency, operational duplication, and coordination gaps. Border security performance was operationalized through detection efficiency, trade facilitation, and revenue protection. Integrated risk management covered intelligence integration, joint risk assessment, shared information systems, and coordinated enforcement.

The responses were analyzed using means and standard deviations; associations were examined with Pearson correlations; and hypotheses were tested through multiple regression.

Participation was voluntary and responses were analyzed in aggregate. No identifying information is reported. Because the dataset is cross-sectional and perception-based, the analysis establishes statistical association rather than definitive causality.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to personnel across selected border management agencies in Nigeria. A total of 228 questionnaires were returned and found suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 91.2 percent.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agency	Nigeria Customs Service	82	36.0
	Nigeria Immigration Service	58	25.4
	NAFDAC	35	15.4
	Standards Organization of Nigeria	28	12.3
	Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service	25	10.9
Position	Operational Staff	119	52.2
	Supervisory Staff	71	31.1
	Management Staff	38	16.7

Years of Service	1–5 Years	62	27.2
	6–10 Years	89	39.0
	Above 10 Years	77	33.8

Source: Field Survey, 2026

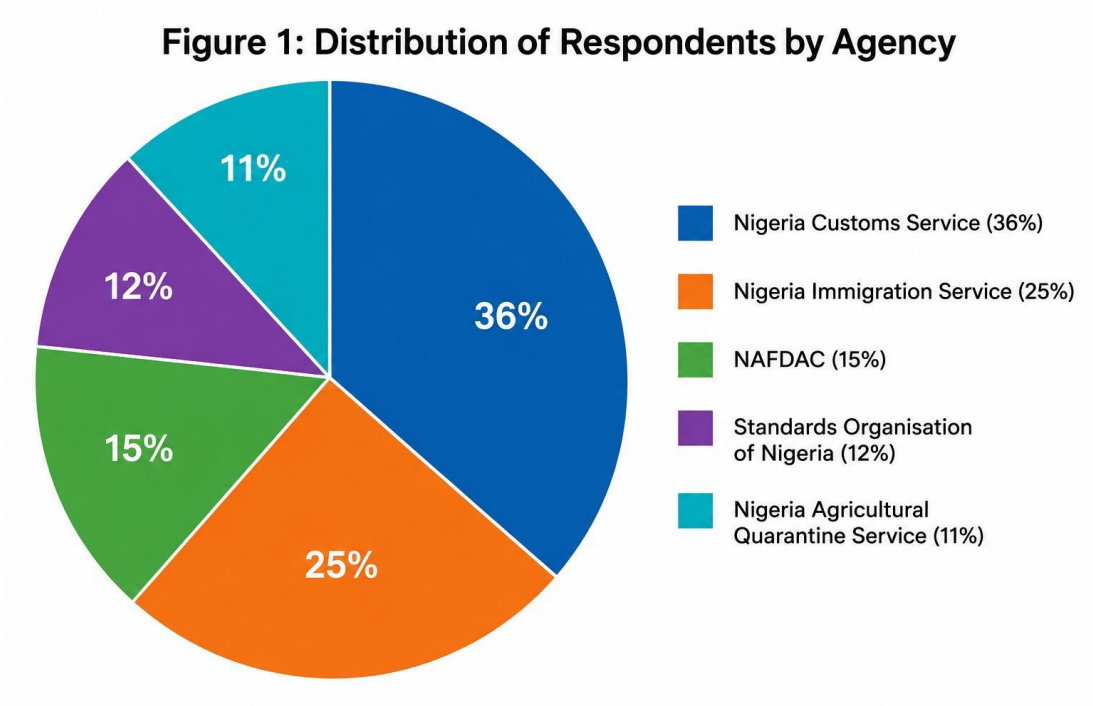
The result indicated that, the majority of respondents were drawn from the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and closely followed by the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS). These agencies possessed sufficient operational experience to provide informed responses regarding border management practices. Also, based on position, operational staff had the highest participant of about 52percent. In like manner, the analysis showed that, majority of the respondents have between 6- and 10-years working experience that enable them to provide adequate information on the subject matter.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis on Interagency Fragmentation and Border Security Performance in Nigeria

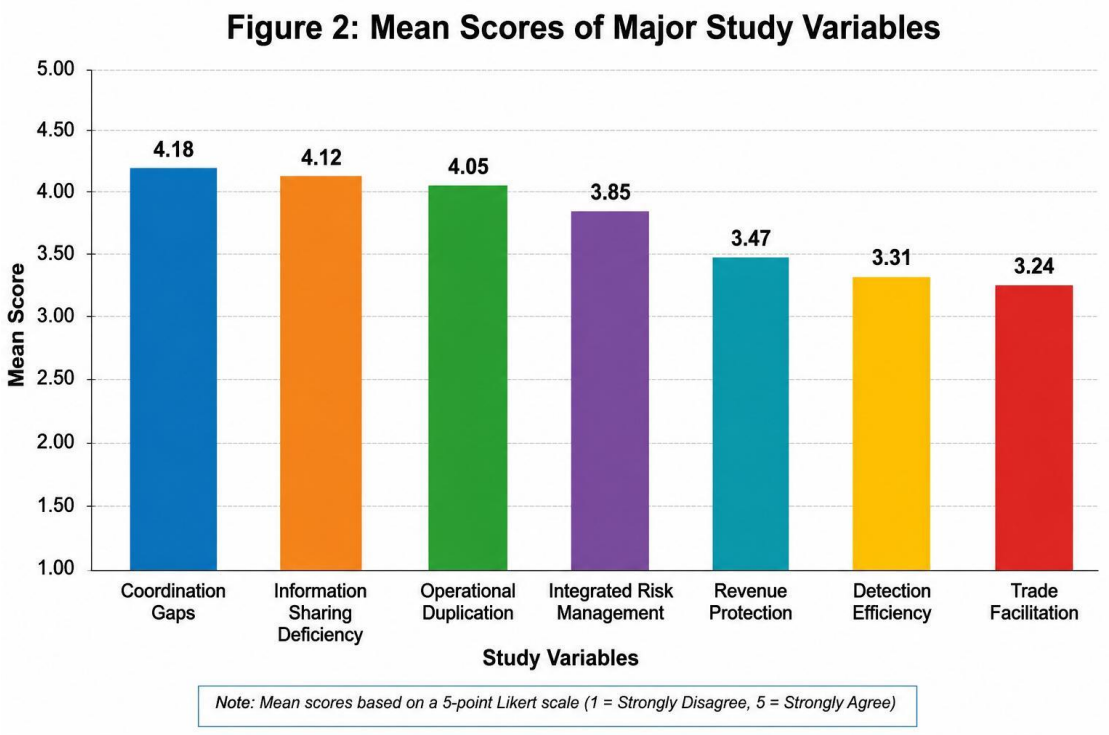
Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Information Sharing Deficiency	4.12	0.78	High
Operational Duplication	4.05	0.81	High
Coordination Gaps	4.18	0.73	High
Detection Efficiency	3.31	0.69	Moderate
Trade Facilitation	3.24	0.72	Moderate
Revenue Protection	3.47	0.75	Moderate
Integrated Risk Management	3.85	0.70	High

Source: Authors Computation from SPSS Version 30 Based on Field Survey, 2026

The finding showed that, respondents perceived information sharing deficiencies, operational duplication, and coordination gaps as major challenges within Nigeria's border management system. Detection efficiency, trade facilitation, and revenue protection recorded moderate performance levels, indicating room for improvement.



The distribution demonstrates broad representation across the major border management institutions.



The chart indicated that, coordination gaps constitute the most significant dimension of interagency fragmentation.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	ISD	OD	CG	DE	TF	RP
Information Sharing Deficiency (ISD)	1.000					
Operational Duplication (OD)	0.642	1.000				
Coordination Gaps (CG)	0.713	0.687	1.000			
Detection Efficiency (DE)	-0.581	-0.533	-0.622	1.000		
Trade Facilitation (TF)	-0.517	-0.609	-0.571	0.628	1.000	
Revenue Protection (RP)	-0.548	-0.562	-0.646	0.675	0.593	1.000

Source: Authors Computation from SPSS Version 30 Based on Field Survey, 2026

The results reveal negative relationships between the dimensions of interagency fragmentation and the indicators of border security performance. Higher levels of fragmentation are associated with lower levels of detection efficiency, trade facilitation, and revenue protection.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Border Security Performance

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Information Sharing Deficiency	-0.312	-4.918	0.000
Operational Duplication	-0.241	-3.864	0.000
Coordination Gaps	-0.387	-5.773	0.000
Integrated Risk Management	0.296	4.627	0.000
R^2=0.610	Prob F-Stat=0.0000		

Source: Authors Computation from SPSS Version 30

The regression results indicated that, interagency fragmentation had negative and significant effects on border security performance. Coordination gaps exerted the strongest negative effect, followed by information sharing deficiency and operational duplication. Integrated risk management recorded a positive and significant effect on performance outcomes.

Meanwhile, it was evidence from the findings that, Nigeria's border agencies function as an interdependent system but are constrained by institutional separation. Coordination gaps emerged as the strongest predictor, suggesting that, the existence of several capable agencies does not itself produce collective capability. Without common planning, clear escalation channels, and aligned enforcement priorities, agency-specific strengths are not converted into system-level performance. This supports the Systems Theory proposition that weak relationships among components reduce the effectiveness of the whole.

In summary, the paper found that, information-sharing deficiency also had a substantial negative effect. Border risks are cumulative and cross-domain; customs declarations,

immigration histories, regulatory licences, inspection findings, and intelligence alerts become more valuable when analyzed together. Siloed databases therefore create blind spots and delay intervention. Recent coordinated-border-management practice demonstrates that harmonized data catalogues, standardized documentary requirements, and coordinated information flows can reduce agency proliferation and support integrated risk management.

Operational duplication was the weakest of the three negative predictors but remained substantively important. Repeated inspections and document checks consume scarce personnel time, lengthen clearance processes, and increase uncertainty for compliant traders. The especially strong correlation between duplication and trade facilitation reinforces the practical case for sequenced or joint inspections based on a common risk decision rather than agency-by-agency intervention.

The positive coefficient for integrated risk management indicates that integration can counteract the effects of fragmentation. Joint risk assessment, shared intelligence, and coordinated enforcement improve targeting while allowing low-risk traffic to move with fewer interruptions.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study used descriptive statistics to examine the effects of interagency fragmentation on border security performance in Nigeria within the context of integrated risk management. The study focused on information sharing deficiency, operational duplication, and coordination gaps as key dimensions of fragmentation, while detection efficiency, trade facilitation, and revenue protection served as indicators of border security performance. The findings revealed that, interagency fragmentation remains a significant challenge within Nigeria's border management system. Information sharing deficiencies limit the timely exchange of intelligence among border agencies, thereby reducing the effectiveness of risk assessment and enforcement activities. Operational duplication contributes to delays in cargo clearance, increased administrative costs, and inefficient utilization of resources. Coordination gaps further weaken institutional collaboration and undermine collective responses to border security threats. The study also found that, integrated risk management plays an important role in improving border security outcomes. Intelligence integration, joint risk assessment, shared information systems, and coordinated enforcement activities strengthen institutional cooperation and enhance operational effectiveness. The results suggest that, improved coordination among border agencies contributes positively to detection efficiency, facilitates legitimate trade, and strengthens revenue protection mechanisms.

Overall, the study concludes that, effective border security performance cannot be achieved through isolated institutional efforts. Sustainable improvements in border governance require stronger collaboration, enhanced information sharing, and integrated risk management practices that reduce fragmentation and promote collective action among border management agencies in Nigeria.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed: The Federal Government should establish a unified border information management platform that enables real time intelligence sharing among all border management agencies. Also, border management agencies should adopt joint risk assessment frameworks to ensure consistency in

threat identification, inspection procedures, and enforcement decisions in order to reduce duplication and improve operational efficiency. Moreover, government should strengthen institutional coordination through the establishment of permanent interagency border management committees at national and operational levels that will facilitate information exchange, joint planning, and collaborative decision making among participating agencies. Border agencies should increase investment in integrated digital technologies that support intelligence analysis, cargo tracking, data sharing, and automated risk profiling. Improved technological integration would enhance border security performance while supporting trade facilitation objectives. Finally, policymakers should prioritize the implementation of integrated risk management reforms as a strategic approach for improving border security performance.

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