



# Monarch Business School Switzerland

Ph.D. / Doctor of Business Administration  
Dissertation Summary

Recommendations for Expediting the  
Implementation of the Common Market Protocol in  
the East African Community

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## Abstract

The East African Community (EAC) marks one among many of the efforts of East African countries, including Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan, Burundi and Rwanda to unite. As far back as the colonial era, these countries sought economic and social integration through the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway in 1897. The East African Community ratified the Common Market Protocol (CMP) in 2010 with the goal of increasing intra-regional trade by allowing the free movement of factors of production, such as capital, people, goods, and services. The growth in trade through a common market would, in turn, promote the region's integration. However, the EAC member states are yet to fully embrace the protocol despite the anticipated benefits. The process has dragged on for years due to numerous setbacks.

The research analysed the hindrances to the CMP's full adoption through theories of international trade, regional integration and economic growth while highlighting achievements and solutions towards enhancing the CMP. The research interrogated international business paradigms and noted the dominance of firm level paradigms leaving the emerging interaction paradigm understudied. The research utilised triangulation including a literature review, content analysis, field research findings from questionnaires and the interviewing of selected individuals from the member state governments, regional trade bodies and private sector practitioners across the region. The research used a mixed methods research design with multiple regression for pre-study quantitative findings and interpretative phenomenology for qualitative findings.

The findings posit that the Customs Union, EAC passport and free movement of goods are the major achievements, while poor political leadership, divergent national laws and poor physical infrastructure are the major challenges. The research proposes trade liberalization, reconciliation, market-driven cooperation, the principle of subsidiarity and political cooperation as major solutions towards CMP implementation. The commonalities from the data triangulation brought out components that were added by linking the information to formulate the framework for enhancing the implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol. The framework is believed to be the first to illustrate how key stakeholders can work together to propel a regional integration initiative towards a seamless common market. The framework also adds to International Business theory in the understudied emerging interaction paradigm.

The implementation framework developed in this research can be useful in ensuring that the EAC achieves its CMP implementation goals. Other regional trading blocs can borrow lessons from the East African Community and use the framework as a guideline to resolve issues related to implementation in their common markets. At present, the newly formed African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) keen on implementing a free trade area across the African continent could also benefit from this framework.

*Keywords: Common Market Protocol, East African Community, Regional Integration, Trading blocs, Regional Economic Communities, Common Market, International Business, International Trade*

## 1. Introduction

Over 280 regional trading agreements with varying levels of success have been recorded worldwide (Hancock, 2011; Simms & Simms, 2007; The World Bank, 2018). These regional trade agreements have the potential of increasing market access, growing economies, creating employment, encouraging creativity and innovation, access to cheap and abundant capital, more choices for customers and stronger positions in international treaty negotiations (Bischoff, 2021; Mwasha, 2015; Nubong, 2021).

The European Union is seen as the most progressive regional trading bloc having been successful in implementing a common currency, a customs union, a monetary union and the free movement of people and workers across the region (Maas, 2015). Similarly, other blocs have had a few successes. Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) allow free movement of people among partner states for up to a maximum of 90 days (Mudungwe, 2015; Sibiri, 2016). Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have advanced physical infrastructure facilitating movement in the region (Das, 2016; Vidya & Taghizadeh-Hesary, 2021). In the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), citizens are allowed to live and work in partner states for two years (Maas, 2015). North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is largely successful due to political goodwill and equal treatment of investors across the region (Feils & Rahman, 2008; Ofuani, 2017; Villarreal, & Fergusson, 2017).

In contrast, MERCOSUR, ECOWAS, SADC and ASEAN have experienced challenges such as the lack of a compelling vision for integration (Njura, 2016), the fear of losing sovereignty and lack of political will (Charalambides et al., 2014). SADC is yet to achieve internal tariff elimination (Bronauer & Yoon, 2018; Vanzetti, Peters & Knebel, 2016), ECOWAS nations have divergent fiscal variables (Adegbemi et al., 2013; Kebalo, 2019), West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and ASEAN have not yet achieved perfect capital market development and integration (Kanga, Tyson & Raga, 2021; Robiyanto & Ernayani, 2018; Yabara, 2015), ASEAN still faces physical infrastructure challenges with Nations such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and the Philippines having physical connectivity problems (Yu, 2017) and Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) grapples with poor political leadership (Franklin, 2019; Owino, 2009).

Studies such as those done by Bischoff (2021), Gondwe (2021), Maas (2015), Moyo (2021) Moyo, Inocent and Laine (2021) and Obasaju et al. (2021), indicate that blocs

such as SADC, Caribbean Community -CARICOM, MERCOSUR, ASEAN, ECOWAS and COMESA are yet to achieve a seamless common market. Similarly, the EAC is yet to realise a seamless common market, which motivated this research that sought to investigate the challenges of implementation and what can be done to resolve them.

The East African Community (EAC) market size has approximately 177 million people with a potential GDP of about US\$ 194 billion (EAC Secretariat, 2019b; Himbara, 2020). The East African Community (EAC) came into existence with the aims of strengthening and improving cooperation based on historical ties and understanding between the states involved (Charalambides, Brooks, Chikura, Grant, Langalanga & Sodipo, 2014). The EAC now comprises six East African states namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan (Charalambides, 2017; Ejones, Agbola & Mahmood, 2021; Franklin, 2019). This regional integration initiative marks one among many efforts of East African states to unite. The initial attempt of East African states at integration was marked by the formation of the first East African Community (EAC) in 1967 between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The move was a result of the three countries' history of cooperation with the help of regional integration arrangements, such as the Customs Union established between Uganda and Kenya in 1917, which Tanzania (then called Tanganyika) joined in 1927 (EAC, 2019). Others included the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa, the East African Currency Board, the East African Income Tax Board, the East African Governors' Conference, and the Joint Economic Council, which were created between 1905 and 1940. In addition, the East African High Commission (EAHC) of 1948-1961 was established to oversee and coordinate the creation of a customs union, a common external tariff, postage, and currency and shared services in education, research, communications and transport (Njuki, 2016; Zwanenberg & King, 1975).

The Commission was, however, replaced by the East African Common Services Organisation (EACSO) of 1961 in the hopes that a political federation would be formed between Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. However, the EACSO was weakened by member states' differential political and fiscal policies and Kenya's economic dominance over its fellow partners (Gastorn & Masinde, 2017). These problems further hindered the attainment of political integration through a federation composed of the member states. The original EAC was dissolved in 1977 (Goldstein & Ndung'u, Hazelwood, 1979; Majune & Mwanja, 2021). The collapse was attributed to economic, social, and political factors. Economically, the concentration of economic activities in Kenya led to the uneven distribution of benefits from trade, in which case, Kenya was seen to benefit at the expense of Uganda and Tanzania, prompting the latter two to restrict the entry of Kenyan goods into their territories (Aloo, 2017). Socially, minimal mass participation

was a key determinant of the failure of the EAC in 1977 (Kamanga, 2018; Ouma, 2021). The member states also lacked sound policies to rectify the disproportionate sharing of economic gains and strong political will for integration and failed to encourage the participation of the private sector and citizens in regional cooperation. The collapse posed more challenges to regional trade and integration due to the closure of borders and inter-country connections, such as railways, airways, and postal and telecommunications services (Aloo, 2017; EAC, 2019; Gastorn & Masinde, 2017; Kamanga, 2018; Njoroje, 2010).

Nevertheless, the EAC was revived in 1999 following renewed cooperation efforts that culminated in the signing of the EAC Treaty by the founding countries - Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania - in Arusha on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1999 and its enforcement on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2000. Burundi and Rwanda subsequently joined the new EAC in 2007, whereas South Sudan signed the EAC accession treaty and officially joined this regional bloc on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016, raising the number of the member countries to six (The World Bank and EAC Secretariat, 2016). The EAC's efforts to integrate since its revival have borne some fruit as evidenced by such milestones as the establishment of a Customs Union in 2005 and a Common Market Protocol (CMP) in 2009, which was enforced in July 2010, and a Monetary Union in 2013 (EAC, 2019). However, 12 years later, the CMP is yet to be fully implemented, which necessitated this research to investigate the possible causes for the delay and what can be done to resolve them.

## 2. The Main Research Question

With the aforementioned in mind, the following main research question was developed:

### **The Main Research Question**

*“What are the characteristics of a new conceptual framework that better explains how the implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol can be enhanced?”*

As Table 1 indicates, the Common Market is a field with a significant amount of available research. The bibliometric analysis conducted in Google Scholar, JSTOR and ProQuest using the keywords Common Market and Common Market Protocol revealed that there is limited research on all aspects of the Common Market and Common Market Protocol in the EAC. The overall common market search results show 3,588,736 in ProQuest, 233,212 in JSTOR and 3,670,000 in Google Scholar. The EAC common market Protocol has the lowest search results around the world with only 906 in

Recommendations for Expediting the Implementation of the  
Common Market Protocol in the East African Community

ProQuest, 741 in JSTOR and 13,600 in Google scholar. Further, the EAC Common Market Protocol shows even lower results when compared to its regional counterparts in Sub-Saharan Africa. This supports the assertion that research conducted on the EAC Common Market Protocol is critical in the further development of the academic field.

**Table 1**  
**Bibliometric Analysis**  
**Common Market and Common Market Protocol**

TERM	Entries In ProQuest	Entries In JSTOR	Entries in Google Scholar
Common Market	3,588,736	233,212	3,670,000
EAC Common Market	5,186	5,169	41,400
European union Common Market	700,614	48,893	3,310,000
North America Common Market	961,866	54,884	3,440,000
Latin America Common Market	271,660	30,511	2,590,000
Central America Common Market	847,951	56,293	3,760,000
Australian Common Market	279,999	20,584	2,420,000
ASEAN Common Market	35,875	12,473	174,000
Middle East Common market	442,454	285,773	3,210,000
Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)	448,680	349,850	3,330,000
Asia Common Market	1,803,179	222,624	3,070,000
ECOWAS Common Market	1,700	2,041	29,100
SADC Common Market	1,773	2,284	40,900
Common Market Protocol	206,199	77,265	1,560,000
ASEAN Common Market protocol	2,185	1,892	31,600
SADC Common Market Protocol	6,434	762	19,500
EAC Common Market Protocol	906	741	13,600
North America Common Market Protocol	92,107	28,079	370,000
ASEAN Common Market Protocol	3,825	1,892	380,000
ECOWAS Common Market Protocol	1466	12,767	204,000
EU Common Market Protocol	35,592	17,532	269,000
Latin America Common Market protocol	28,315	13,966	194,000
Central America Common Market protocol	82,841	31,791	483,000
Australian Common Market Protocol	24,942	9,415	165,000

*Source: Ntara C (July, 2021)*

Despite the challenges faced globally by regional groupings, a closer look at International Business scholarship indicates that the study of International Business has been predominantly about the firm and its operations. The concentration of International Business inquiry has been on the eclectic, extension and cross border paradigms, which are firm-level paradigms. The focus on the firm almost entirely has been termed by scholars as unnecessarily restrictive, abridging the field's contributions in terms of the impact it could have on both private and public policymaking (Buckley & Lessard, 2005; Buckley, 2002; Shenkar, 2004; Toyne & Nigh, 1998). International Business has

evolved from being defined as an area of study that looks at the firm and its operations to one that studies the trading relationships between countries. Hence, the new school of thought in International Business proposes that scholars need to give weight to the word “business” than to the word “firm” ( Buckley & Lessard, 2005; Dunning, 2006; Shenkar, 2004; Sullivan & Daniels, 2008; Toyne & Nigh, 1998). Furthermore, new thinking in international business highlights the need to improve rigour in methodologies used by scholars with the mixed methods research design and data triangulation proposed (Cerar et al., 2021; Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2016; Eden et al., 2020; Nielsen et al., 2020; Valbuena & Montenegro, 2017). The new thinking proposes the need for scholarship in the understudied emerging interaction paradigm, which concentrates on the ever-changing multi-level regional trading environment that encompasses firms, groups, individuals and governments. The research on the EAC Common Market falls under the emerging interaction paradigm contributing to the much-needed recent advancements to international business theory.

The Common Market Protocol (CMP) is one of the pillars of the EAC’s regional integration efforts. It was created to enable the uninhibited movement of people, capital, goods, and services and allow the citizens of EAC countries to reside, work, or establish themselves and businesses anywhere within the bloc (EAC Secretariat, 2019; Mose et al., 2021). Despite the Common Market Protocol being in place since 2010 coupled with the many years of regional integration and desire of EAC member states to have a Common Market, the CMP is yet to attain the expected benefits ( Franklin, 2019; Okidi, 2018). Research by Yusuf dated 2021 states:

“The regional economic integration initiative in East Africa is making very slow progress... African policymakers appear to be ignorant of regional and national realities, and each government's weaknesses and strengths. They may not apply the appropriate medicine to the appropriate issue. To complicate things tougher (sic), leaders neglect the will to address all recurrent issues”, (Yusuf, 2021, p.67).

Furthermore, research conducted within the EAC has largely focused on single aspects of the CMP implementation. For instance, Aloo (2017), Bakari (2016), Calabrese and Mendez-Parra (2016) and Kahiya (2021) only look at one challenge affecting implementation. Further, one country studies dominate the research on EAC. Studies such as those done by Adyanga (2019), Matemere and Promise (2018) and Nakanjako (2021) focused on the Common Market issues in one country. Consequently, other studies do not explore implementation challenges but instead look at other aspects of regional integration. No study, however, offers a framework with components that comprehensively capture the achievements made and potential solutions for the

challenges to the implementation of the Common Market Protocol, and the present research sought to fill this gap. To shed light on CMP implementation and add to the discourse on regional trading blocs in International Business, the following hypotheses were developed:

H0 <sub>1</sub>	Divergent macroeconomic structures do not affect the implementation of the CMP.
H0 <sub>2</sub>	Physical infrastructure does not derail the enforcement of the CMP.
H0 <sub>3</sub>	Restrictive national laws and policies do not decelerate the pace of adoption of the CMP.
H0 <sub>4</sub>	Weak institutional and domestic capacity does not frustrate the implementation of the CMP.
H0 <sub>5</sub>	Political leadership has no influence on the implementation of the CMP.

The theoretical framework was organised to highlight the triangulation between international trade, regional integration and economic growth theories. The nexus of the three theoretical domains is the review of CMP implementation literature.

For a description of the literature to provide a better understanding of the scholarship within the larger context of the research, the researcher used the approach proposed by Toyne and Nigh (1998) as a guideline. The review followed a thematic integrative approach. First, the review looked at the definitions of International Business and shed light on the best definition for the present research. Second, the literature interrogated the International Business paradigms and explored the theoretical underpinnings that relate to regional trading blocs. Third, regional integration which stems from the expansive view of International Business was discussed in the context of the East African Community Common Market Protocol implementation.

Table 2 provides an aggregate of the terminology used in the research. With regards to limitations, the researcher faced difficulty in accessing some of the respondents, especially the ministers dealing with the East African Community given their level of seniority. The researcher acknowledged the time and resource constraints when The researcher relied on the judgment of respondents, recommendations by industry peers, and the availability of respondents.



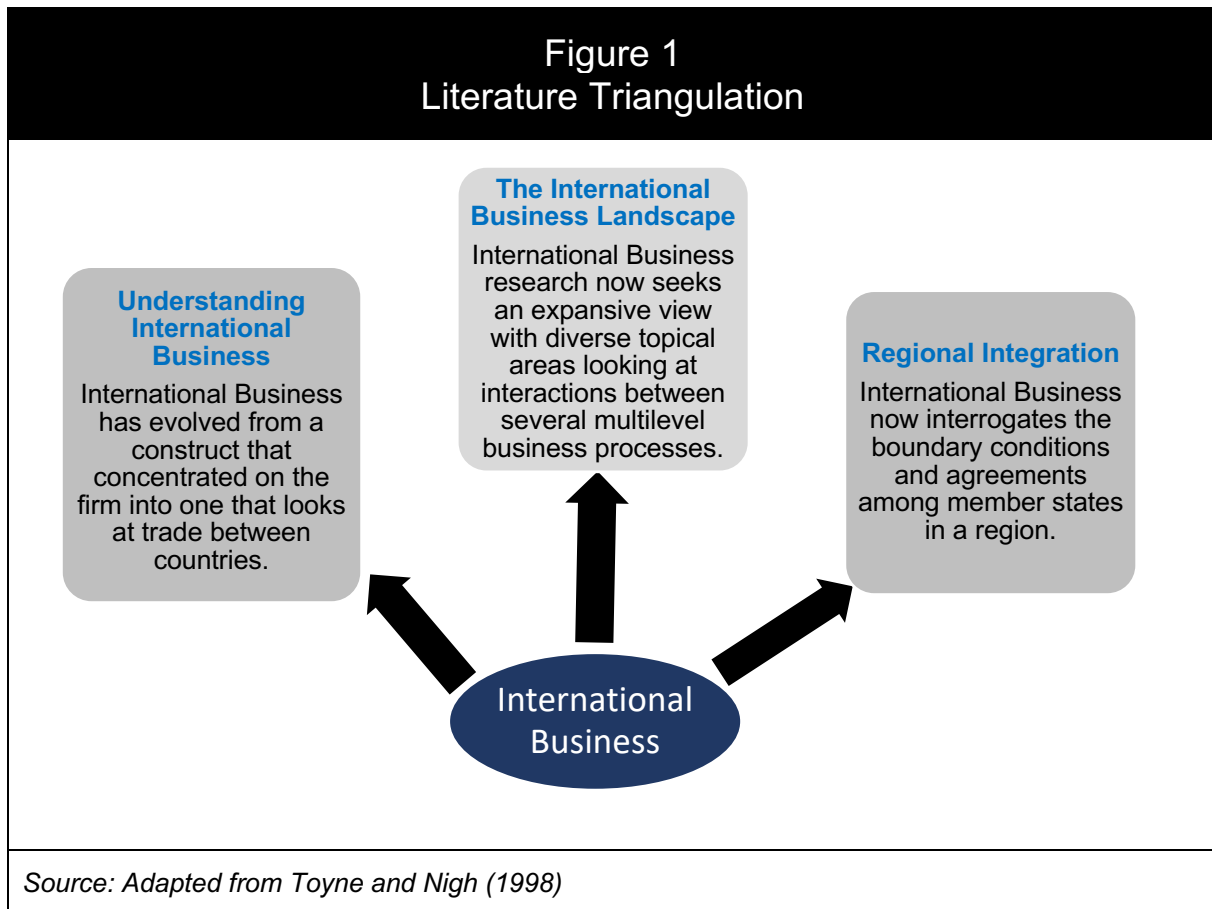
**Table 2**  
**Definition of Terms**

Trade Block	Group of states in a specific region that promotes and manages trade activities (Mansfield & Pevehouse, 2000). Trading blocs enhance trade creation and trade liberalization between states (Campa & Sorenson, 1996; Wei & Frankel, 1998).
Regional Integration	A process where bordering states agree to promote collaboration through common rules and institutions (Robson, 2004; Santos-Paulino et al., 2019). The objectives of the agreement could range from political, environmental or economic (Ismail, 2017).
Common Market	A group of countries imposing a common tariff on trade with other states and few or no duties on trade with one another (Hadjiyiannis, 2004; Wooton, 1988).
Regionalism	Expression of a common sense of purpose and identity, and the establishment of institutions that convey a particular identity within a geographical region (Barnekow & Kulkarni, 2017).
Customs Union	A group of states that decide to charge similar import duties and consent to free trade between them (Sven, 2014; Weststrate, 1948).
Trade Liberalisation	The reduction or elimination of restrictions on the free exchange of goods between states. These barriers comprise tariffs, such as duties and surcharges, and nontariff barriers, such as licensing rules and quotas (Dix-carneiro & Kovak, 2017; Hadjiyiannis, 2004; Schmidt, 1964).
Tariff	Tax emanating from imports (Hallaert, 2010). The government imposes this tax on the imports of a given commodity (Hayakawa & Kimura, 2015; Itoh & Ono, 1982).
Quota	A limit to the quantity that can be traded across borders (Itoh & Ono, 1982). It controls imports of commodities physically (Panagariya, 2003).
Common Market Protocol	An agreement between states that allows for the free movement of goods, services, labour, workers, and capital. It promotes economic and social development among member states (Saigal, 2014).
Bilateral Trade	Bilateral trade is the exchange of products between two states promoting investment and trade. (Baier & Bergstrand, 2007).
Multilateral Trade	The exchange of goods between three or more states endorsing investment and trade. The states remove or lessen import quotas, tariffs, export restraints, and further trade barriers (Aldonas, 1997).
Source: Ntara C. (2020)	

### 3. Literature Review

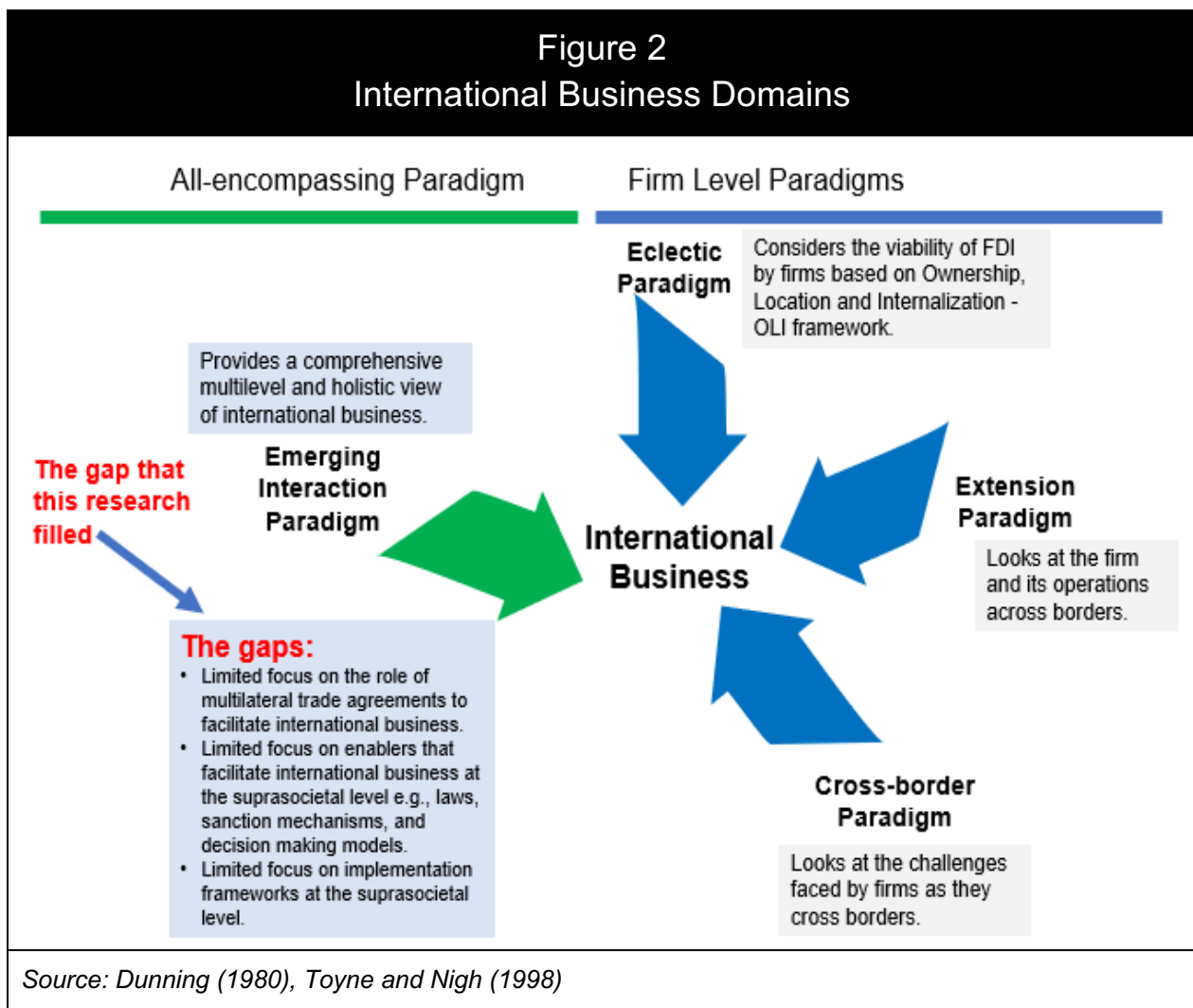
Figure 1 exhibits the approach of the literature review. International Business has evolved from a construct that concentrates on the firm into one that looks at trade between countries. International Business research now seeks an expansive view with diverse topical areas looking at interactions between several multilevel business processes.

As pertains to regional integration, International Business now interrogates the boundary conditions and agreements among member states in a region (Toyne & Nigh, 1998). The concept of International Business has become a focus of attention for researchers due to its aim in targeting markets across national borders (Fruin, 2007; Peng, 2004). The literature review interrogates International Business paradigms, theoretical domains, CMP implementation observations in the context of regional integration, methodological and research gaps.



### 3.1 International Business Paradigms

International Business has concentrated on the firm in the eclectic, cross border and extension paradigms with scholars interrogating topical areas specific to the firm. The extension paradigm views International Business as an extension of a firm’s activities across national borders. The cross-border paradigm concerns itself with the problems encountered as firms move goods and capital across national borders (Peng, 2004). The eclectic paradigm considers how firms can make a foreign direct investment based on the attractiveness presented by such an investment (Figure 2).



The eclectic paradigm considers ownership, location and internalization advantages of investing (Dunning, 1980). However, progressive thinking in International Business has suggested the need for scholarship on the emerging interaction paradigm that looks at an expansive view of International Business beyond the firm. Studies in International Business are largely from the Americas, Asia and Europe with Africa receiving the least representation. Scholars argue that there is an increased appetite for studies in international trade where the present research falls.

International business scholars do not propose the replacement of the eclectic, extension and cross-border paradigms. On the contrary, they agree that despite their inadequacies they are useful in providing insights into the functioning of the economic enterprise. However, they insist that by focusing almost exclusively on the firm, International Business inquiry is selling itself short in terms of the influence it could have on both public and private policymaking. In their thinking, scholars note that economic integration between states can be seen as an effort to internalize global markets, as well as, the development of region-internal competitive advantages. This submits that reasons for adopting the firm-level paradigms also underlie the formation of regional blocs. The evolving (or emerging) interaction paradigm could help in providing a more expansive view of International Business since it places value on discovery, integration, and application.

Hence, the emerging interaction paradigm provides International Business with an opportunity to develop into an intellectual field with its distinct perspective and body of knowledge with links to other fields that advance both International Business's knowledge, generating objectives and a more general understanding of humans and their social constructions (Roth, Cheng, Henisz & Swaminathan, 2009). Thus, the new school of thought in International Business proposes that scholars need to give much more weight to the word "business" than to the word "firm" ( Buckley & Lessard, 2005; Dunning, 2006; Shenkar, 2004; Sullivan & Daniels, 2008; Toyne & Nigh, 1998). Consequently, the research on EAC falls under the emerging interaction paradigm as it concentrates on the ever-changing multi-level regional trading environment that encompasses firms, groups, individuals and governments. Therefore, the study of the EAC Common Market Protocol adds to knowledge by filling gaps related to the limited focus on implementation frameworks and multilateral trade agreements at the suprasocietal level, and the role of enablers in facilitating International Business.

### 3.2 Theoretical Domains

CMP Implementation is informed by three theoretical domains namely international trade, regional integration and economic growth. CMP implementation comes into

perspective when looked at in the context of growing EAC economies for the benefit of EAC citizens (Theories of Economic Growth), enhancing trade between member states (International trade theories) and honouring the regional integration initiative that intends to actualize a seamless common market (Regional Integration theories).

International trade theories can inform the regional integration process and trade activities in the EAC. They provide a rationale for the choices of goods in which EAC member states trade – these decisions are shaped by the comparative, absolute, and competitive advantages of EAC countries. In this way, the international trade theories are critical to the promotion and sustenance of inter-EAC trade, which, in turn, fosters the region's integration. David Ricardo advanced the theory of Comparative Advantage to explain that although a country enjoys a total advantage in the production of goods, specialization and trade are still feasible (Barker, 2000; Beaudreau, 2015; Lam, 2015; Maneschi, 1992; Mathieson, 2016; Sen, 2010). According to this theory, a nation should concentrate on making items in which it will incur low production costs and then export those goods and use the returns to purchase imports with higher production expenses (Cavusgil et al., 2015; Ellsworth, 1940; Levchenko et al., 2012; Rauch, 1991; Redding, 1999). Therefore, EAC members do not have to make all the goods that they consume, but, rather, they need only produce the products over which they have an absolute advantage and then trade with other countries to acquire the rest.

Adam Smith's Absolute Advantage theory refers to a nation's ability to generate goods more effectively and efficiently than other countries and trade them for similarly produced goods by other nations (Barker, 2000; Marrewijk, 2009; Seretis & Tsaliki, 2016). As such, a nation benefits by generating and exporting only those goods that it can produce using fewer resources than another country (Cavusgil et al., 2015; Lam, 2015; Maneschi, 1992). In turn, it imports those that it lacks an absolute advantage in producing. EAC nations, for example, can be said to have an absolute advantage in agricultural products as they can produce them more cheaply than technological ones like machines. Thus, their exports consist largely of agricultural items, whereas their imports are predominantly non-agricultural goods. Michael Porter's National Competitive Advantage theory suggests that nations can position themselves for International Business success. A nation's competitive advantage depends on the collective competitive advantages of its firms (Cavusgil et al., 2015; Ketels, 2006). This relationship becomes reciprocal over time; the nation's competitive advantages facilitate the development of new companies and industries with these same strengths.

Regional integration theories offer direction on the EAC's regional integration initiative that intends to actualize a seamless common market. The endogenous and

neoclassical growth theories explain how economies grow based on capital accumulation, income generation, production capacity and full employment of resources which ultimately have an impact on a regional integration initiative, like the EAC. The neo-functional theory suggests that sovereign states integrate their sectors by placing them under joint control. The sectors chosen should be significant but must not threaten the vested interests of the member states (Kinyua, 2015). Thus, the joint activity of the member states exceeds the sum of their independent operations. The essence of neo-functionalism is that it acknowledges that integration is shaped by the national interests of individual member states (Amin, 2010; Dion, 2004; Hamad, 2016; Lamessa & Gonzalo, 2021; Sergio, 2009). In the EAC, this convergence is necessary for the success of the CMP's implementation and is possible through the harmonization of fiscal and economic policies and legislation across member states.

Secondly, according to Dion (2004), Muller (2004), Ravenhill (2016), Sakyi and Opoku (2014), regionalism involves cooperation between governments within a geographical region. Political regionalism denotes the role of institutions in helping states build a shared identity and have a voice in international affairs and multilateral organizations (Bischoff, 2021; Kasaija, 2010). It may boost the global participation of individual countries and, thereby, strengthen their sovereignty (Dion, 2004; Gibb & Michalak, 1996; Hurrell, 1995; Marinov, 2015; McLaren, 2002; Ravenhill, 2016; Taylor, 2003; Whiteman & Nagar, 2009). Functional regionalism alludes to interstate cooperation on specific matters, such as transport and communication infrastructure and climate (Ravenhill, 2016). Economic regionalism entails the collaborative effort of nations to eradicate barriers to the movement of labour, capital, goods and services. It takes the form of free trade areas (FTAs), customs unions and common markets, and economic unions. In the EAC, the CMP's implementation points to economic regionalism because it requires the elimination of impediments to the movement of labour, capital, and goods and services. However, the process also depends on the political will (political regionalism) and collaboration of EAC members in the development of their transport, energy, and ICT infrastructural capacities (functional regionalism) (Sakyi & Opoku, 2014; Watwana, 2014).

Furthermore, new regionalism arose from the need to focus on more than the establishment of free trade framework and security partnerships and to recognize the challenges encountered by the countries trying to integrate into one global market (Mittelman, 1996; Muller, 2004; Yuzhu, 2021). New regionalism stresses that regional trade requires more cooperation than competition in terms of heightened trade and investment (Ethier, 1998; Masinde & Omolo, 2017; Roozendaa, 2006). It acknowledges that actors such as civil society, business communities, and informal networks play a

critical role in regional projects (Muller, 2004; Sakyi & Opoku, 2014). Therefore, the implication for the EAC is that the members need to cooperate more and involve key actors to boost the adoption of the CMP and intra-regional trade.

Liberal intergovernmentalism was established by Andrew Moravcsik in 1995. The theory is based on European integration and was the principal theory of European integration in the 1990s. Liberal intergovernmentalism indicates that the responsibility of enhancing integration lies in the hands of national governments (Moravcsik, 1995; Schimmelfennig, 2021). National governments have a strong proposal of what their choices are and follow them in bargaining with other states in a bloc. Liberal intergovernmentalists posit that the bargaining power of member states is significant while working towards integration (Kleine & Pollack, 2018; Ngari, 2016). They see institutions as a means of creating reliable obligations for member governments, to ensure other governments stick to their end of the bargain. Liberal intergovernmentalists deem supranational institutions to be of limited significance in the process of integration, in contrast to neofunctionalists (Coskun, 2015; Hooghe & Marks, 2019; Kleine & Pollack, 2018).

The theoretical enquiry of determinants of economic growth is grounded in endogenous and neoclassical growth theories. Under the neoclassical growth theory, economic policy measures, economic integration, and other institutional characteristics do not influence the steady-state growth rate (Sena, 2018). The growth rate is exclusively determined by the exogenous rate of technological advancement. According to the neoclassical growth theory, increases in efficiency or institutional changes and changes in investment ratios resulting from economic integration have only temporary effects on the growth rate. Shifts in the general productivity level lead to temporary or short term growth effects. Dion (2004) notes that the growth effects are credited to the founding, widening or deepening of a regional integration agreement. The productivity shift in turn prompts enhanced physical capital formation that slowly diminishes towards its long term steady state (Eyster, 2014; Njoroge, 2010; Sena, 2018; Sharipov, 2015; Yu, 2017). Therefore, economic integration is considered to be similar to any other major economic policy change that affects economic growth only on the transition path heading towards the steady-state (Kamau, 2010; Schiff & Winters, 2003).

The endogenous growth theory posits that the enrichment of a nation's human capital will lead to economic growth by developing new forms of technology and effective and efficient means of production. Additionally, the theory assumes that when human capital is introduced knowledge flows freely and if it keeps up with other investments, trade patterns can transfer technology and returns can be sustained. The access to a bigger technological base through integration measures may in turn speed up growth (Njuki,

2016; Pietak, 2014). This theory affirms the free movement of people and workers across the EAC region as proposed by the Common Market Protocol.

### 3.3 CMP Implementation Observations

A review of literature of the EAC Common Market sheds light on the present state of implementation. Some of the achievements associated with the EAC CMP so far are the opening of border posts for 24 hours, harmonisation of entry/exit forms and work permit issuance procedures, issuance of student passes, work permit fee waivers by Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, and the joint promotion of tourism (Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development, 2019). Thus, one of the expected benefits of the CMP is to deepen and broaden the economic integration of EAC partner states through the liberalisation of intraregional trade (EAC Secretariat, 2021; Gastorn & Masinde, 2017).

Additional benefits include protection of the East Africa region from global economic shocks, a Common External Tariff that can protect the EAC's local industries and conflict resolution systems. In addition, the construction and operationalisation of One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) for housing border agencies and accelerating goods' clearance is another benefit (Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development, 2019). Despite the advantages mentioned above, the implementation of the EAC CMP is still lagging and thus hindering the member states from enjoying the gains anticipated from regional integration (Akaranga & Makau, 2016; Anami, 2020; Kamanga, 2018, Sigano, 2019).

The lag in full implementation is seen across various key areas in the EAC. First, EAC states have differential approaches to export and investment promotion, lack uniform policies for trading with non-member states, and portray non-standardised customs formalities (Otieno-Odek, 2018; Yusuf, 2021). Also, EAC stakeholders have raised concerns about member states' failure to enforce key resolutions of the EAC Council due to disharmonious national rules and regulations that are poorly aligned with regional protocols (Anam, 2020; Laski, 2015; Njeru, 2016; Okidi, 2018). Moreover, the EAC's institutions are still underdeveloped, resulting in their weak ability to enforce regional decisions (Gathii, 2016; Lugalla, 2016; Mathieson, 2016). Despite having weak institutions, EAC governments drag their feet in reforming legal and regulatory encumbrances and eradicating discriminatory practices. These practices revolve around securities, credit, direct investment, as well as, personal capital (Njuki, 2016) and the region's heterogeneity in terms of migration flows (Kahiya, 2021).



Also, sectoral ministries, departments, and agencies delay in amending national laws relevant to the Protocol (EALA, 2016). Subsequently, because the EAC Secretariat makes macroeconomic policies, it requires the input of private sector organizations such as the East Africa Business Council (EABC) (EAC Secretariat, 2020; KEPSA, 2017; Kiggundu & Walter, 2015). However, the private sector and citizens within the EAC remain largely uninformed about the CMP adoption process (Bainomugisha & Sebastiano, 2016; CABI, 2020; EALA, 2016; KEPSA, 2017; Okidi, 2018). Lastly, other constraints facing the adoption of the CMP are the fragility of democracy in the EAC and poor infrastructure development (World Trade Organization, 2019). Poor infrastructure contributes to the lag in the actualisation of the CMP by impeding its' provisions for the liberal movement of services, goods, persons, and labour (Calabrese & Mendez-Parra, 2016; Chen, Fressynet & Kalembo, 2017; Mwesigye, 2021; Obasaju, Olayiwola, Okodua, Adediran & Lawal, 2021).

### 3.4 Methodological Observations

Scholars in International Business have argued that the field is multidisciplinary and borrows heavily from other fields (Buckley & Lessard, 2005; Peter Buckley, 2002; Toyne & Nigh, 1998). The scholarship in International Business has stagnated for many years with scholars concentrating on single aspects of inquiry. They have been accused of using simplistic approaches to inquiries, using no controls and seem to be limited in their findings (Buckley & Casson, 2021; Eden et al., 2020). The need for an all-encompassing approach to the study of International Business has been echoed citing the growth of global challenges that need the direct input of International Business scholars (Baena Rojas et al., 2020; Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2016). Table 3 provides a summary of all observations.

First, the majority of studies have used secondary data while others use limited samples and generalize their findings. Yang et al. (2006) conducted a study where they reviewed 1,296 empirical articles published in leading International Business journals from 1992 to 2003. The results show that the mail questionnaire surveys dominate empirical research. In addition, 60.9% of the studies use a one nation sample with 88.9% being from western nations and the least explored being from the African continent. Similar findings are recorded in a more recent study by Kolk and Rivera-Santos (2018) in their investigation of 271 publications about Africa in top business journals globally. The researchers establish that Africa remains underexplored in International Business inquiry (Ratten et al., 2020).

Second, the majority of the studies concentrate on a singular method of data collection and analysis. Methods such as content analysis were found in only 63 of the studies

Recommendations for Expediting the Implementation of the  
Common Market Protocol in the East African Community

reviewed. Content analysis has been largely ignored in International Business research. However, despite it being tedious and time-consuming it has promising potential in International Business discourse. Ferreira et al. (2013), conducts a study of 2426 articles published in three leading International Business journals namely, the Journal of International Business Studies (1278 articles), Management International Review (904) and International Business Review (244 articles) from 1966 to 2010. The study notes that International Business scholars use similar methodologies and approaches in their work as they cite the most revered authors in their study areas.

**Table 3**  
**Methodological Gaps**

Methodological Gaps	How The Present Research Fills The Gap
International business samples concentrate on the US, Europe, Australia and Asia (Baena Rojas et al., 2020; Ferreira et al., 2013; Ratten et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2006)	This research adds to the larger corpus of knowledge on regional trade agreements and International Business discourse from an African perspective. Further, the research is focused on trading blocs which is an understudied International Business topic globally.
One country sample is prevalent in international business research (Eden & Nielsen, 2020; Franke & Richey, 2010).	The present research uses three countries as a sample. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have been working towards regional integration since 1927.
The administered questionnaire, personal interview and content analysis fall among the least used types of data collection methods in international business (Yang et al., 2006). The majority of the studies concentrate on a singular method of data collection (Cerar et al., 2021; Kolk & Rivera-Santos, 2018; Nielsen et al., 2020). There is a surge in the use of secondary data singly among IB scholars (Cerar et al., 2021).	The present research applies a triangulated approach using the administered questionnaire, personal interviews and content analysis. The triangulation makes findings robust.
International business inquiry has been accused of using simple methods that make it impossible for other areas to borrow from the IB field. (Cerar et al., 2021; Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2016; Eden et al., 2020; Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006; Nielsen et al., 2020).	A mixed-methods approach is used including multiple regression for the pre-study quantitative data and phenomenology for qualitative data. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no single study has used phenomenology in the reviewed International Business articles as well as the EAC research.
<i>Source: Ntara C (2021)</i>	

Tenzer et al (2017) conduct a study on International Business to review the future of research. They identify 264 articles from 1987 to 2016 and find out that the mixed method which includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis is the least used method of analysis in International Business around the world. This limits International Business discourse to the use of secondary data or the mail questionnaire. The International Business discourse would benefit from new approaches and daring ideas. Ferreira et al. (2013) echo the findings of (Kolk & Rivera-Santos, 2018; Yang et al., 2006) that research done over the years concentrates on samples from countries in Europe, the USA and Asia leaving African countries under-researched and under-represented in International Business discourse.

Third, one country studies are prevalent in International Business research. To improve the rigour of International Business research the scope of study needs to be broadened (Buckley, 2002; Buckley & Casson, 2021; Ferreira et al., 2013; Hyman et al., 2008; Marcos, 2010; Yang et al., 2006). One country research is limiting and may give unreliable findings. Franke and Richey (2010) note that a key strategy for refining International Business generalizations is to use larger samples of countries, because research grounded on a common sample may lead to generalizations that the findings cannot justify. Eden and Nielsen (2020) add that one nation samples can be termed as a limited data source. Therefore, mixed methods research would be most appropriate for tackling expansive topics in International Business (Buckley et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2006). Hurmerinta-Peltomäki and Nummela note that:

“Because of globalization, the increasing pace of change in the global business ... research problems related to International Business appear to have changed in nature. Consequently, it could be argued that the solution to these problems requires a holistic, multidisciplinary and multi-method approach”, (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006, p.453).

Eden et al (2020) insist that the rigour of International Business research needs to be such that other fields of research will trust the findings of scholars. They add that simplistic methodologies have taken up space in International Business research over the years. They mention simplistic methodologies to mean the use of methods that seem easy and do not need much involvement from the researcher. Cuervo-Cazurra et al (2016) add that the rigour of International Business can be improved by making use of mixed methods research. They compare the number of articles and the research method over the years and show that most studies were either quantitative or qualitative with very few using the mixed methods. They note that there is a steady growth in the use of qualitative analysis from 2001 onwards but quantitative analysis remains popular.

Lastly, in a study spanning 19 years, 2000-2019, Cerar, Nell and Reiche (2021) find that there's a decline in the use of primary data among International Business scholars. Cerar et al. (2021) propose triangulation as a robust methodological choice. The findings of this study are in agreement with the contributions of Eden and Nielsen (2020) and Tenzer et al. (2017) who indicate that quantitative analysis remains popular whereas mixed methods design is the least used methodology in International Business inquiry. Recent research conducted by Nielsen, Welch, Chidlow, Miller, Aguzzoli, Gardner, Karafyllia and Pegoraro (2020) analysing methodological trends in International Business inquiry from 1970-2019 notes that:

“We propose the use of triangulation as a strategy for building methodological alternatives into research designs. Institutionalization of this principle in the field of International Business has the potential to enhance both the rigour and scope of future inquiry”, (Nielsen et al., 2020, p.1).

In reality, the need to interrogate real issues and provide solutions using acceptable methodological approaches by International Business scholars is much needed in this age of globalization (Ado & Wanjiru, 2018; Baena Rojas et al., 2020; Peter Buckley et al., 2017; Buckley & Casson, 2021; Cerar et al., 2021; Eden et al., 2020; Kolk & Rivera-Santos, 2018; Nielsen et al., 2020; Ratten et al., 2020).

### 3.5 Research Gaps

First, the research filled the identified gaps in the literature (Table 4), which included the failure of some authors to study CMP implementation and instead, focus on other topics related to the EAC. Most of the studies focus on one facet of the Common Market Protocol and fail to examine how the free movement of all factors would affect the EAC. Thus, the research focused on the CMP's implementation as a whole and impediments to the process. Some researchers examined none of the CMP implementation issues, while others cited only one or a few of these factors. Unlike the present research, none of the authors reviewed simultaneously addressed all of these issues associated with CMP implementation. The research also considered the implementation of the CMP in the entire EAC rather than in one or a few member states like some authors.

In line with International Business scholarship, the emerging interaction paradigm remains understudied ( Buckley et al., 2017; Toyne & Nigh, 1998). International Business study has concentrated on the firm (Daniels, 1991; Griffith et al., 2008) and ignored the other critical aspects of International Business such as trade between countries. Key topics interrogated by scholars over the years revolve around the firm and its operations.

Recommendations for Expediting the Implementation of the  
Common Market Protocol in the East African Community

**Table 4**  
**Gaps in Literature**

Research Gap	Researchers	Research Contribution
Focus on one EAC country and generalize findings.	Magara (2015), Ogalo (2012), Anyango (2014), Bolo (2011), Kinyua (2015), Matemere and Promise (2018) etc.	
Do not focus on CMP implementation. Instead, they study the monetary union and common currency.	Adam et al. (2016); Mafusire and Brixiova (2013); Muthui et al. (2016) Rusuhuzwa and Masson (2013) etc.	✓ The research particularly focuses on the CMP's implementation as a whole and impediments to the process.
Focuses only on the free movement of labour or goods which is one aspect of the CMP. They do not interrogate the free movement of other factors.	Aloo (2017), Gabagambi (2015), Kago and Masinde (2017), Kahiya (2021), Nyagah (2013), Onduko (2013), Wandera (2012), Watwana (2014) etc.	✓ The research considers the implementation of the CMP in the entire EAC rather than in one member state.
Focuses on one or two challenges affecting CMP implementation.	Adero and Aligula (2015), Adyanga (2019), Anyango (2014) Bakari (2016), Bänder (2018), Calabrese and Mendez-Parra (2016), Gathii (2016), Himbara (2020), Kaahwa (2017), Kinyua (2015), Lugalla (2016), Mathieson (2016), Ouma (2021) etc.	✓ The research interrogates all challenges discussed in the literature, highlights achievements and solutions. ✓ The research presents a framework aimed at enhancing CMP implementation.
Do not explore the EAC common market implementation but instead focuses on other aspects of regional integration.	Asche (2021), Atsiaya (2014), Bainomugisha and Rwengabo (2016) Eyster (2014), Laski (2015), Mbithi and Chekwoti (2016), Moywaywa (2015), Rwengabo (2016) Nakanjako (2021), Nubong (2021) Yusuf (2021) etc.	✓ The research adds to the discourse on international business scholarship in the emerging interaction paradigm contributing to the much-needed recent advancements in the field.
Literature in International Business concentrates on the eclectic, cross border and extension paradigms.	Buckley et al., (2017); Daniels, (1991); Griffith et al., (2008); Toyne and Nigh (1998) etc.	✓ The research studies regional trading blocs.
Regional trading blocs remain understudied.	Hyman et al., (2008) and Valbuena and Montenegro (2017) etc.	
Limited focus on implementation frameworks outside the firm to enhance development and contribute to policy making	Buckley and Casson (2021); Fruin (2007) etc.	
<i>Source: Ntara C (2021)</i>		

The major topics addressed in the top six International Business journals from 1992 to 2002 are centred around the theory of the firm which falls under the eclectic, extension and cross-border management paradigms. The topic on trading blocs and regional markets is among the least studied with only 23 mentions for the period (Hyman et al., 2008). A study conducted by Beamish and Inkpen (1994) looking at major topical areas studied by scholars in the Journal of International Business Studies from 1970 -1994 found only two studies on trading blocs and regional markets for the entire period. Recent research shows the growing interest in international trade as a topical area in International Business. Valbuena and Montenegro (2017) conducted research that involved searching the keywords 'research' and 'International Business' in the Scopus database.

They concentrated on peer-reviewed journals published from 2012-2016 and narrowed them down to 44 articles. They found that there is an appetite among scholars for topics outside the firm and its activities. The first two emerging topics according to their research are the emerging economy and international trade.

### 3.6 The Chosen Methodological Approach

First, earlier studies in international business research call for increasing the number of nations sampled. The present research samples Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania which are three nations out of the six in the East African community. The researcher notes that these states being a part of the regional integration initiative from 1927 were best suited to give the information required by the researcher. Rwanda and Burundi joined the EAC in 2007, while South Sudan joined in 2016. The researchers' use of data collected from several nations can increase validity, and in turn, augment the generalizability of the findings. The sample constitutes African countries meaning this research adds to scholarship in International Business from an African perspective, which remains largely under-researched.

Second, the mail questionnaire has dominated international business research (Marcos, 2010; Yang et al., 2006). However, the literature on refining International Business inquiry underscores the importance of intensive time commitment for data collection, the researcher's personal engagement to gain access to the data, and iterative inquiries and analysis of primary data. As such, the present research used face to face interviews and self-administered questionnaires while ensuring the researcher's full involvement. Consequently, to avoid a single method bias, the researcher used mixed methods research. Cerar et al. (2021), Eden and Nielsen (2020), Nielsen et al. (2020) and Tenzer et al. (2017) note that mixed methods research is rarely used by scholars in international business research and propose the design to increase rigour. As such, the

research employed a mixed-methods research design. Quantitative research was applied as a pre-study which informed the qualitative questioning.

Third, qualitative research in international business has been in use though infrequent with the main research streams depending more on quantitative methods (Doz, 2011; Sinkovics, Penz & Ghauri, 2008). Therefore, the study uses interpretative phenomenology for qualitative analysis. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of the past research reviewed has used phenomenology and this presents a gap that this study fills. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological research methodology is appropriate for studying human-related experiences. Phenomenology proved useful for the present research because it needed a worldview that invited thorough scrutiny of the way individuals assign significance to their everyday responsibilities and encounters in their natural situations. In the EAC, the lived experiences, opinions and perceptions of EAC stakeholders who have been there since the inception of the CMP in 2010 helped in shedding light on the issues at hand.

## 4. Methodology

The research used mixed methods with multiple regression for pre-study quantitative findings and phenomenology for qualitative findings. The research design structure was based on the methodological gaps in International Business scholarship and the call for rigour among scholars. The research extended previous literature in International Business specific to the understudied emerging interaction paradigm.

### 4.1 Appropriateness of Method

The mixed-method research was preferred for this research due to its' potential of filling the void left out by other studies that have largely concentrated on quantitative or qualitative analysis in a singular version. The mixed research design is the most appropriate as it caters for the gaps and inconsistencies witnessed in International Business inquiry over the years (Baena Rojas et al, 2020; Eden et al., 2020; Ferreira et al, 2013; Franke and Richey, 2010; Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela (2006); Hyman et al., 2008; Marcos, 2010 and Yang et al., 2006).

First, International Business scholars use similar methodologies and approaches in their work as they cite the most revered authors in their study areas. This limits International Business discourse to the use of secondary data. Further, mixed-method research is rare as researchers have concentrated on either quantitative or qualitative research methodology limiting the rigour of inquiry (Baena Rojas et al., 2020; Eden et al., 2020).

International Business discourse would benefit from new approaches and daring ideas (Ferreira et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2006).

Second, International Business studies use a one nation sample (Eden & Nielsen, 2020) with most being from western nations (Baena Rojas et al., 2020; Ferreira et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2006). Furthermore, the majority of the studies concentrated on a singular method of data collection with methods such as content analysis receiving the least attention (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2006).

Lastly, a review of the methodologies in articles published about the East African community echoes the findings of Baena Rojas et al. (2020), Cerar et al. (2021), Eden et al. (2020), Ferreira et al (2013) Franke and Richey (2010), Hurmerinta-Peltomäki and Nummela (2006), Hyman et al. (2008), Marcos, (2010) and Yang et al. (2006). It appears that the majority of studies concentrate on a singular version of data collection and analysis, one nation samples are prevalent, quantitative analysis is highly preferred, the use of primary data is on the decline and methods such as content analysis have received little attention in EAC Common Market Scholarship.

## 4.2 Research Design

The research employed mixed methods research and used multiple regression and phenomenology to analyze the data. Data triangulation inclusive of literature review, content analysis and questionnaires and interviews were adopted for this study. The quantitative analysis was conducted as a pre-study that informed the qualitative questioning.

First, the researcher checked for validity and reliability. A pilot study of fifteen individuals was done to check the reliability of the questionnaire and five individuals for the interview guide. Before the research was conducted, draft questions were pre-tested to achieve a high degree of precision and remove ambiguity. Further, questions that do not yield the required data were discarded. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the multiple question Likert scale. The reliability testing checked each variable and established that all the variables were good to excellent. The Cronbach's alpha results for macroeconomic structures, political leadership, national laws and regulations and CMP Implementation stood at 86%, 83%, 89% and 82.8% respectively. Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is interpreted to be good if it is between 0.8 (80%) and 0.9 (90%). Physical infrastructure and Institutional and domestic capacity stood at 93% and 92.5% respectively. The alpha( $\alpha$ ) is interpreted to be excellent if it is greater than or equal to 0.9 (90%).



## Recommendations for Expediting the Implementation of the Common Market Protocol in the East African Community

The researcher used the Lawshe content validity test to check whether the questionnaire items are essential, removed those that were unnecessary and made corrections. The researcher checked for content validity by sending the questionnaire to ten industry experts who were expected to give their comments. The Lawshe test considers the input of subject matter experts. Out of the 88 items checked, only three were marked as needing revision while one was marked inappropriate. The Content Validity ratios for items ranged from 0.8-1, which indicated that more than half of the subject matter experts marked the items as appropriate.

**Table 5**  
**Level of Analysis**

Level	Stakeholder	Questionnaires	Interviews	Stakeholder Groups
Macro	Societal	29	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The EAC secretariat-Tanzania</li> <li>✓ Ministry of EAC and Regional Development-Kenya</li> <li>✓ Ministry of EAC Affairs -Uganda</li> <li>✓ Ministry of foreign affairs- Kenya</li> <li>✓ Ministry of Trade -Kenya</li> <li>✓ East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) -Tanzania</li> <li>✓ African Union Commission-Tanzania</li> <li>✓ United Nations Development Program (UNDP) -Kenya</li> <li>✓ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) -Rwanda</li> <li>✓ Rwanda Development Board – Rwanda</li> <li>✓ East African Commission for Science and Technology- Uganda</li> </ul>
Meso	Institutional	58	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Kenya Private sector Alliance - Kenya</li> <li>✓ East Africa Business Council – Tanzania and members – Regional</li> <li>✓ Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI)-Uganda</li> <li>✓ Trade Mark East Africa – Kenya and Tanzania</li> <li>✓ Owners of regional enterprises – Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi</li> <li>✓ Civil Society -Uganda</li> <li>✓ The Institute of Social Policy and Research- South Sudan</li> <li>✓ Academia-Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania</li> </ul>

Source: Ntara, C (2020)

Judgmental and snowball sampling were used in the research. The researcher deliberately selected suitable and experienced individuals to address their research question (Frey, 2018). The researcher used the respondents' social networks to reach specific populations (Parker et al., 2019).

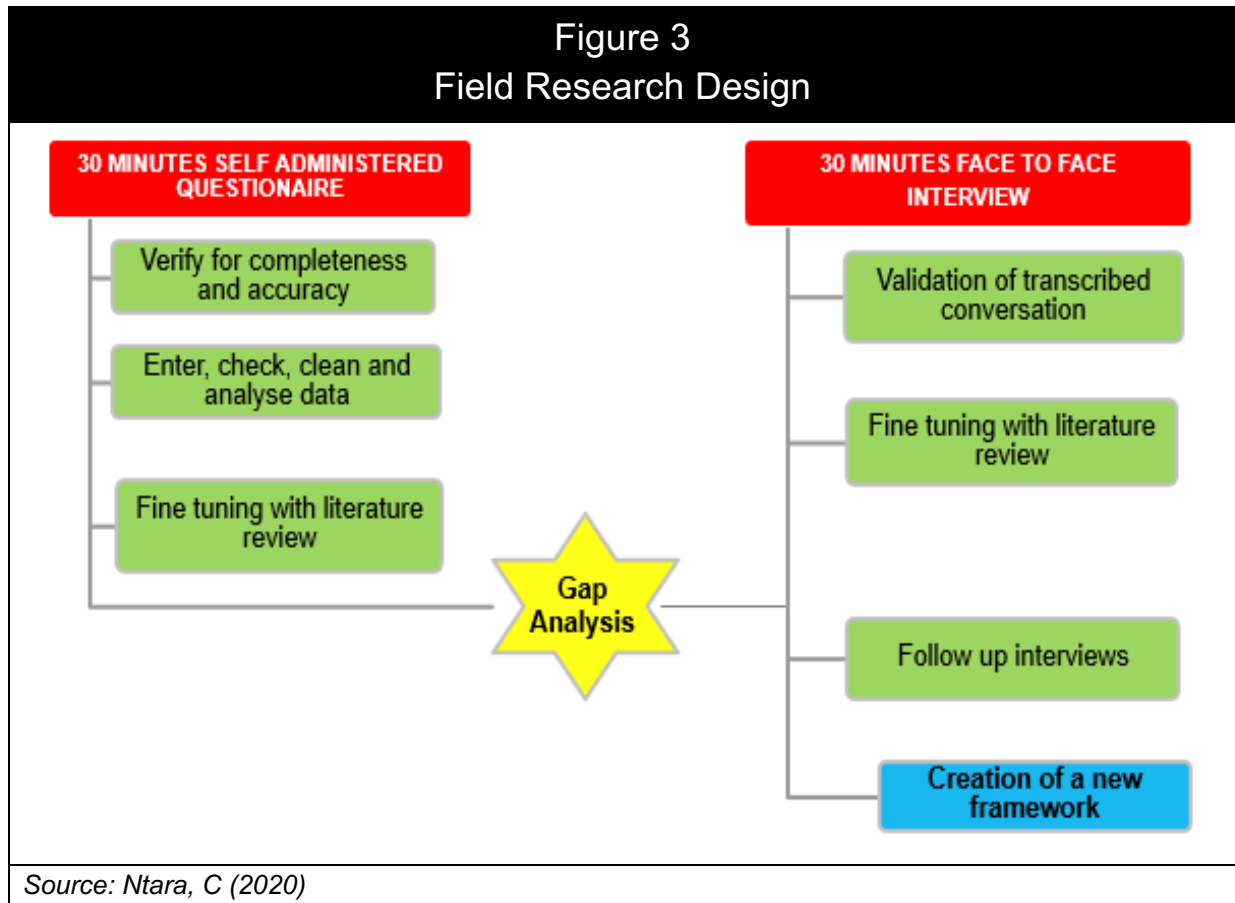
The variables of interest in this research were divergent macroeconomic structures and policies, physical infrastructure, restrictive national laws and regulations, institutional and domestic capacity and political leadership. The themes were organized with statements in a Likert scale format for the questionnaire. The following regression model was used for the quantitative analysis:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + E$$

where, Y = Implementation of EAC Common Market Protocol, X1 = Divergent Microeconomics Structures and Policies, X2 = Physical Infrastructure, X3 = Restrictive National Laws and Regulations, X4 = Institutional and Domestic Capacity, X5 = Political Leadership. The interview guide had four questions that sought the opinions, experiences and perceptions of respondents on the implementation of the CMP.

The research intended to reach 60 respondents from the Macro and Meso levels for the questionnaire and 40 respondents for interviews. The research reached 87 and 21 questionnaire and interview respondents respectively. The research was able to obtain responses from all EAC member states during data collection. (Table 5).

The research design followed the 10-step standardized Monarch Research Process Flow. Responses from the questionnaires were checked for completeness and accuracy. The data was then entered, checked, cleaned and analyzed. Fine-tuning with the literature review and content analysis was done and a gap was identified. Responses from the interviews were validated and fine-tuned with the literature review to identify gaps. Follow up on nine respondents was conducted and a framework was formulated based on the findings. MAXQDA and Minitab software were used for data analysis (Figure 3).



## 5. Data Presentation

Data was presented using MaxMaps, and diagrams including tables and graphs. Data presentation followed the research question which sought to answer how the implementation of the CMP can be enhanced. First, Quantitative data was used to test the hypotheses. The data was presented in tables and figures and informed the qualitative questioning. Selective coding was used in qualitative data to specifically highlight achievements, challenges and solutions while comparing the findings from different stakeholder groups. The achievements, challenges and solutions formed the main categories in this research. Qualitative data was presented in MaxMaps, graphs and tables.

## 5.1 Data Distillation of Pre-study Quantitative Findings

Data collected from the questionnaire was automatically exported into a google spreadsheets file. A link to an online file highlighting all responses from a respondent in word document format immediately after they made the final submission was created. The google document file contained information about the age, gender, level of education, years of service and organization of respondents, as well as, their responses to the Likert scale on the variables related to the study. Participants failing to adequately complete the questions were entirely removed from the data set. Following the removal of incomplete responses, the final analysis of the data set was conducted.

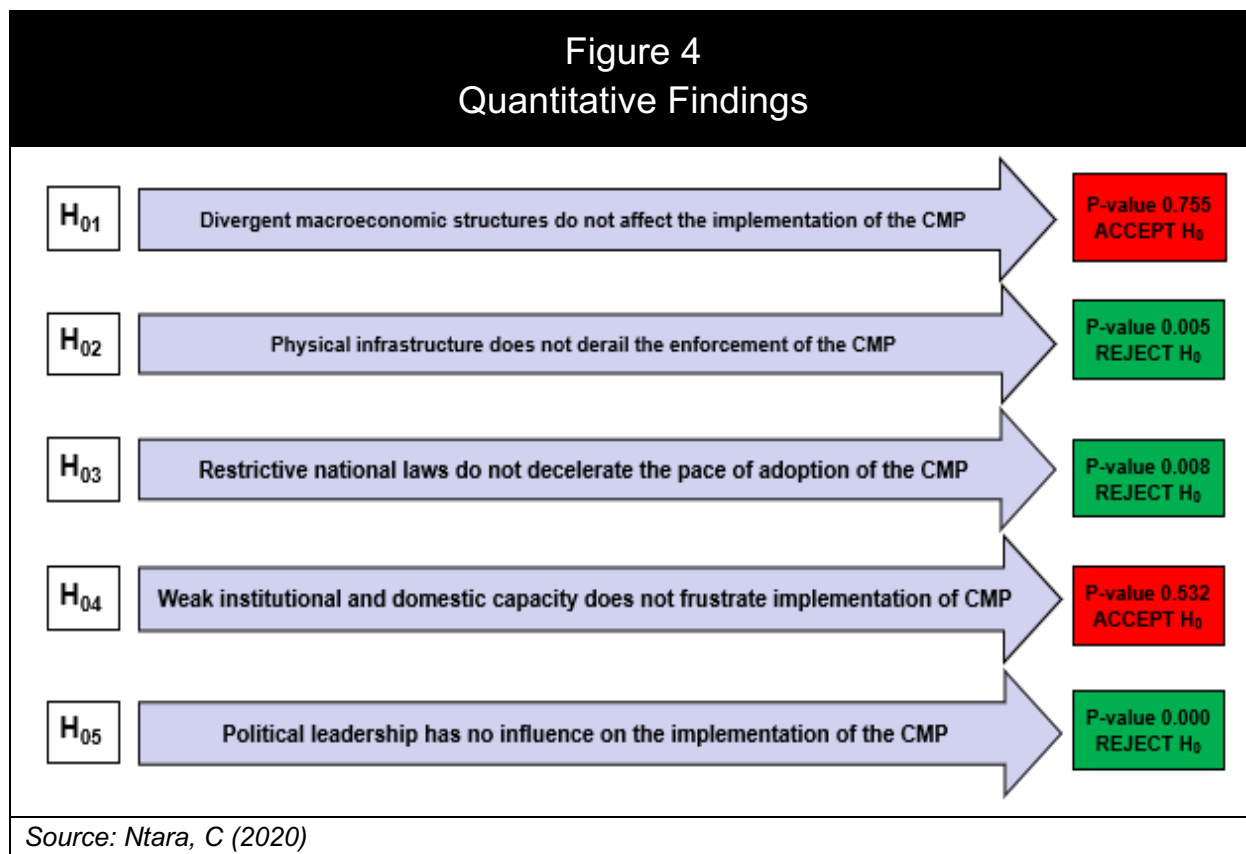
The analysis was based on the Likert scale findings of the questionnaire. The researcher grouped items under each variable in the Likert scale. The grouped items were necessary as one item would not sufficiently capture the key issues under each variable. Sullivan and Artino (2013) support this by noting that grouping items in a survey scale is recommended when a single survey item cannot capture the concept under assessment. Moreover, Carifio and Perla (2008), Norman (2010) and Sullivan and Artino (2013) agree that parametric tests are robust and can be used when the items per group are at least five to ten. In the research, the grouped items had ten or more related items. Therefore, the parametric tests that were conducted were ANOVA and Pearson's correlation. According to Carifio & Perla,

“It is perfectly appropriate to summarise the ratings generated from Likert scales using means and standard deviations, and it is perfectly appropriate to use parametric techniques like Analysis of Variance to analyse Likert scales. It is also perfectly appropriate to calculate Pearson correlation coefficients using the summative ratings from Likert scales and to use these correlations as the basis for various multivariate analytical techniques”, (Carifio & Perla, 2008, pp.1151).

The data was distributed in tables to make it easier to identify the significance of the findings.

### 5.1.1 Pre-study Quantitative Findings

The researcher sought to test hypotheses and the p values in Figure 4. can guide in this regard. For variable X1 with a p-value of .755 ( $p > .05$ ); the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis and concludes that divergent macroeconomic structures do not affect the implementation of the CMP. Variable X2 has a p-value of .005 ( $p < .05$ ); the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that physical infrastructure derails the enforcement of the CMP. Variable X3 has a p-value of .008 ( $p < .05$ ); the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that restrictive national laws and policies decelerate the pace of adoption of the CMP.



Variable X4 has a p-value of .532 ( $p > .05$ ); the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis and concludes that weak institutional and domestic capacity does not frustrate the implementation of the CMP. Variable X5 has a p-value of .000 ( $p < .05$ ); the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that political leadership has influence on the implementation of the CMP. Following the findings of the pre-study quantitative analysis, the basis of the qualitative questioning was outlined.

## 5.2 Data Distillation of Qualitative findings

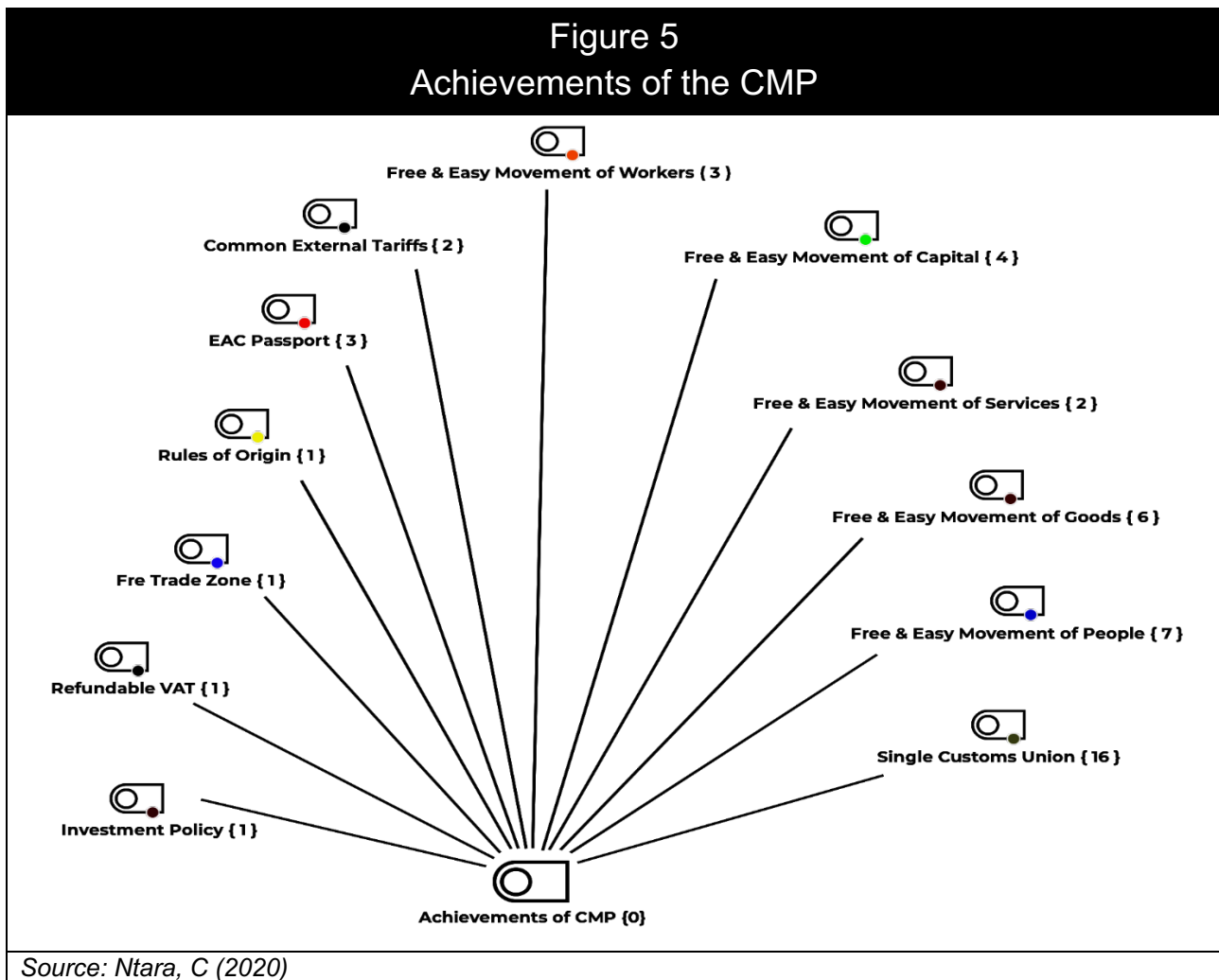
Responses were received from 21 participants. Categorization was done based on achievements, challenges and solutions of CMP implementation. Based on resultant findings, seven thematic codes were highlighted and each of these main areas had sub codes. The thematic codes were related to the achievements, key challenges and solutions of implementation. All achievements were placed under one category and later interrogated based on respondent category and country perspective. Challenges were categorised into five key areas namely poor political leadership, macroeconomic structures, divergent national laws and policies, poor physical infrastructure and institutional and domestic capacity.

The research was categorized with solutions placed into five key areas as mentioned by the respondents. These areas included trade liberalization, political cooperation, reconciliation, the principle of subsidiarity and market-driven cooperation.

Categorization was also done based on respondent category namely private sector, policy makers and politicians. Further, respondents were from different East African states and categorization of findings based on achievements, challenges and solutions by respondent country was done. The data was distributed in graphs, MaxMaps and tables for better identification of the significance of the findings.

### 5.2.1 Summary of Qualitative Findings

The achievements, challenges and solutions to CMP implementation are presented below. (Figure 5)



The single customs union was mentioned 16 times as the major achievement. Free and easy movement of people was highlighted seven times followed by free and easy movement of goods cited six times. Other achievements were the free and easy movement of capital, workers, services and the EAC passport, refundable VAT, rules of origin, common external tariffs and investment policy (Figure 5).

Some of the achievements according to respondents are as follows:

*“In my experience, people are actually working across the region. Normally, we look at professions such as lawyers, doctors when talking about the free movement of people. However, East Africans in the informal sector are already integrating and are moving and working across the region so we need to invest more in the people” (Kenya, Interview 14).*

*“I’m happy to report that there’s free movement of persons without discrimination based on nationality and movement without the requirement to pay for visa fees. This category involves persons moving for purposes of studying (students); for business activities; persons seeking medical treatment; persons transiting through a Partner State and those who move for any other lawful purposes. On the Free movement of Workers- it is guaranteed in Article 10 of the EAC Common Market Protocol. The achievements are that workers are entitled to work in another EAC partner states without discrimination based on nationality. Some Partner States have waived the requirement for workers to pay for Work/ residence permits and Conclusion of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) to enable the following professionals undertake cross border practice within the EAC. Accountants, Veterinarians, Engineers and Architects. The MRAs for land surveyors and advocates were finalized and are awaiting signature by the competent authorities. The MRA for pharmacists is still being negotiated.” (Uganda, Interview 7).*

*“The EAC Passport is a major milestone and it is possible to stay in a Partner State in the region for up to 6 months” (Rwanda, Interview 1).*

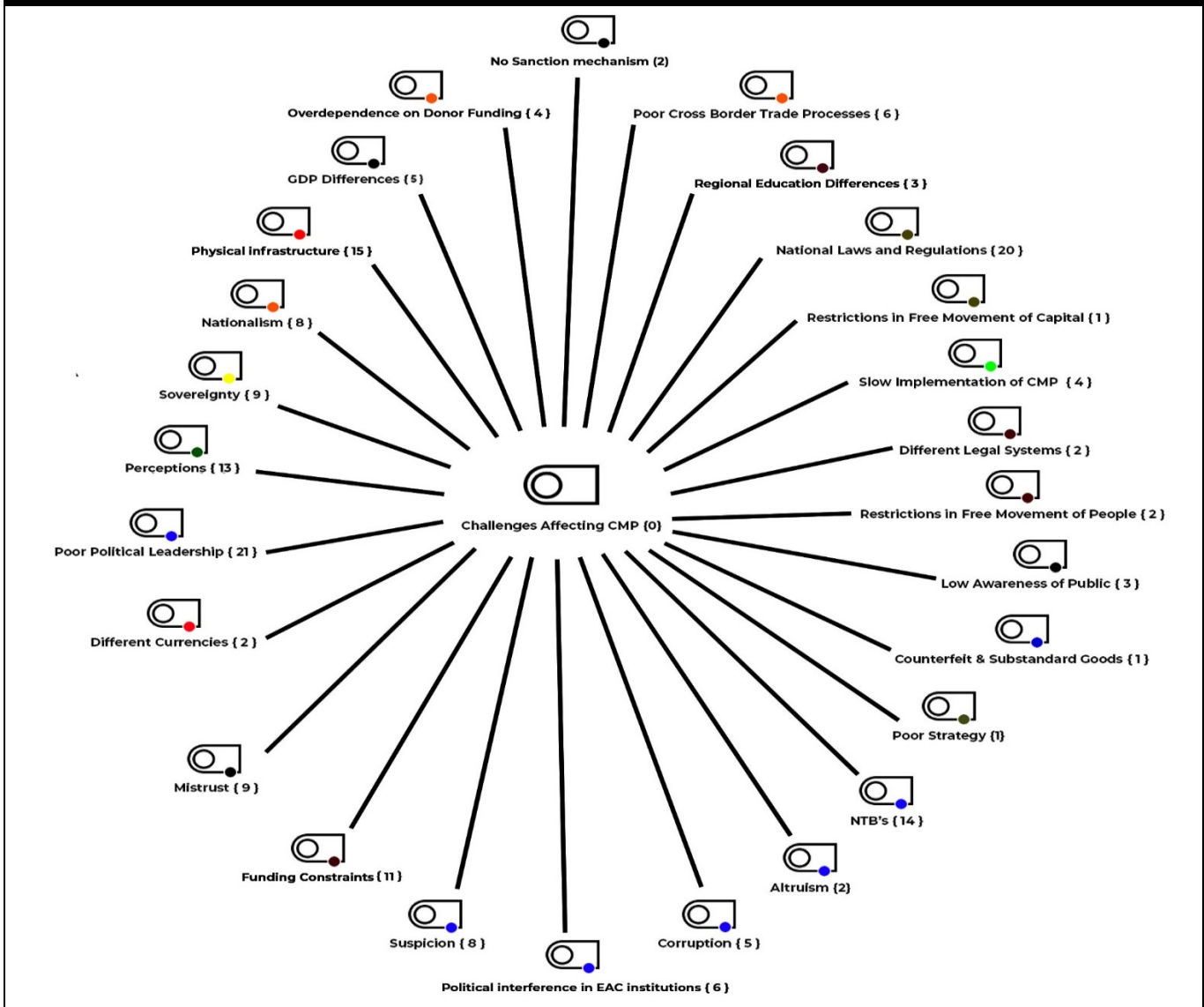
*“At policy level, we have come up with an investment policy which is at the final stage of adoption. Our intention remains to promote balanced competition, citizen participation, building strong relations with regional entities and work towards achievement of the seamless operation of the CMP. We await one partner state to provide her comments” (Tanzania, Interview 3).*

The findings on CMP implementation challenges (Figure 6) shows that political leadership is the leading challenge followed by national laws, physical infrastructure, NTBs, regional perceptions, funding constraints, sovereignty, mistrust, nationalism, suspicion, poor cross border trade policies, corruption, GDP differences, low public

## Recommendations for Expediting the Implementation of the Common Market Protocol in the East African Community

awareness, with the least mentioned challenges being different legal systems, restrictions in free movement of people, poor reconciliation and poor strategy among others.

**Figure 6**  
**Summary of CMP Implementation Challenges**



Source: Ntara C (2020)

Some of the comments from respondents on CMP implementation challenges are as follows:



Recommendations for Expediting the Implementation of the  
Common Market Protocol in the East African Community

*“Politics is a cross-cutting issue and it downplays everything. Politics is nationalistic and shows- it is us against them, this is our way -. In part, countries tend to protect their own domestic economies. This argument is weak because we are one people, region and others view us as the same people. If we remove the borders, we are one big country. Politics has a way of making things not go the way they should go” (Tanzania, Interview 5).*

*“We as the private sector may not be fully involved but we sit in and are invited in many forums, meetings and workshops where we or our members participate. We get ad hoc or planned meeting calls from the government, ministries departments or agencies to give our views and it is one of the many views we give. We comment on issues related to movement of goods, services, removal of tariffs and NTB’s among other key areas. We are involved but in the final decisions we are not. We give suggestions and these can be taken or not. It gets frustrating because at times we do a lot of work and are notified that most of our suggestions were rejected” (Kenya, Interview 17).*

**Table 6**  
**Solutions and Enablers of CMP Implementation**

Solutions	CMP Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cross border trade cooperation (12)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Eliminate Tariff barriers (7)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Eliminate NTB’s (4)</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Harmonize standards (19)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Specialization (2)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Political will and commitment (5)</li> <li>✓ The principle of variable geometry (10)</li> <li>✓ Independence of EAC institutions (15)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ EAC Identity (2)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Citizen participation (3)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Private sector involvement (12)</li> <li>✓ Civil society involvement (1)</li> <li>✓ Regional Unity and Oneness (2)</li> <li>✓ Human resource development (2)</li> <li>✓ Infrastructure development (5)</li> <li>✓ Reduce the cost of movement (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Information sharing (11)</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Relooking at the EAC decision-making model (10)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Automate processes (7)</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Financial solidarity/Funding (5) / member state contributions (8)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sanction mechanism (4)                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ CMP laws (4)</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Anti-corruption (2)</li> <li>✓ Research (2).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source: Ntara, C (2020)

The solutions to CMP implementation are an indication as to how the implementation of the CMP can be enhanced (Table 6). The solutions mentioned were Political solution (18) with political leadership (5), the establishment of a political federation (8), political

will and commitment (5); harmonize standards (19), independence of EAC institutions (15), monetary and fiscal policy harmonization (15), private sector involvement (12), cross border cooperation (12), redefine the principle of variable geometry (10), infrastructure development (5), member state contributions (8), eliminate tariff barriers (7), eliminate NTBs (4), citizen participation (3), civil society involvement (4) specialization (2) and Reconciliation (6) was mentioned by key policy experts and negotiators as the moderator to achieving a seamless CMP Implementation.

Furthermore, respondents cited additional solutions and noted that their absence could be making implementation difficult. The researcher calls these solutions, CMP implementation enablers noting that they are prerequisites for enhancing implementation. They include relooking at the EAC decision-making model (10), financial solidarity (5), automated processes (7), anti-corruption (2), sanction mechanism (4), information sharing (11), CMP laws (4) and Research (2). Some of the comments on solutions and enablers from respondents are as follows:

*“As the private sector we would want to have a voting seat on the table. We have an observer status under East African Business Council” (Kenya, Interview 10).*  
*“Let us have the same standards and apply them across the board. It should not be different in other countries as that becomes a headache. We should harmonize our standards so that we have East African standards. It is frustrating for businesses when moving goods across the region” (Kenya, Interview 17).*

*“There is the problem of what you may call the lack of development of instruments and mechanisms to enforce agreements and undertakings. We don’t have any although they are mentioned in the treaty. As long as we don’t have mechanisms to establish the consequences a culture of impunity grows” (Kenya, Interview 14).*

### 5.3 Data Integration

The comparisons of Achievements, challenges and solutions from the questionnaire and interview respondents indicated significant overall relationships. There are commonalities and a few differences between the two sets of respondents. However, it appears the differences are only related to additional insights in light of the CMP implementation agenda. Both set of respondents seemed to agree that macroeconomic structures and institutional and domestic capacity are symptoms of a much bigger problem. Questionnaire respondents indicate that macroeconomic structures do not affect the implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol. This assertion is supported by interview respondents who note that the lack of CMP laws and economic policies to ensure macroeconomic convergence could be the real problem underlying

macroeconomic structure challenges. Habimana (2020) notes that the EAC has insufficient regulatory approaches undermining efforts towards macroeconomic convergence.

The finding on institutional and domestic capacity is supported by Awinja & Murenzi (2017), Nderitu & Odongo (2017) and Trade Mark East Africa (2020) who note that EAC institutions have been trying their best to provide a platform for reporting any such barriers and resolving them as soon as possible. In addition, it seems that the political interference in the affairs, decisions and activities of these institutions could be the major issue. Further, funding constraints limiting their activities make things worse. Similarities were seen across the sets of respondents in their indication that there are prerequisites for implementation. According to the findings, it appears that key issues mentioned by respondents as fundamental are missing in the goal towards implementation. Some of these are a sanction mechanism, information sharing, funding, CMP laws, public participation and automation of processes. The present research proposes that EAC governments can begin to see the Common Market Protocol as inevitable for economic development by working on implementation enablers. This finding is supported by the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism that the responsibility of enhancing integration lies in the hands of national governments (Moravcsik, 1995; Schimmelfennig, 2021).

Respondents were concerned about the supposed lack of funding for regional projects with the region's member states having difficulty in deciding the best way to fund regional projects. The dependence on donor funding on critical regional projects made policy experts question the seriousness of regional governments in taking ownership of the EAC agenda (Mathieson, 2016; Sigano, 2019). This supposed lack of ownership could explain the information asymmetry, the lack of a sanction mechanism, the lack of CMP and enabling national laws, the ills of corruption and the frustrating decision-making model.

Both sets of respondents agree that there are drawbacks that seem to derail the implementation of the CMP. There are parallels on three major challenges namely poor political leadership, physical infrastructure challenges and divergent national laws. Possibly, respondents could be indicating that once the region establishes what is working, an assessment of the major drawbacks can provide focus in assessing the real issues. In addition, both sets of respondents indicate that assigning responsibilities and encouraging the participation of key stakeholders is an important step in ensuring challenges are handled effectively. Njiraini (2020), Sigano (2019), Urbanus (2020), and Wakabi and Anyanzwa (2018) support the present findings that there is a need to involve the private sector and other citizens in decision making in the EAC.

Lastly, both sets of respondents agree that when role players accomplish their mission the expected outcomes will be the solutions proposed by the experts such as trade liberalization, market-driven cooperation and reconciliation. The realization of the outcomes can eventually lead to a seamless CMP. These findings are reflected in the new framework for the enhancement of CMP implementation.

## 6. Synthesis and Integration

The components of the CMP implementation framework (Figure 7) are informed by information from the literature review, content analysis, and findings from interviews and questionnaires. The framework brings direction on the importance of understanding the achievements made, highlighting drawbacks, and assigning responsibilities to key players to move forward. Further, the framework highlights key enablers that need to be in place for implementation to be seamless. The key enablers are mentioned by respondents in the present research. However, the literature, treaty and protocol for the establishment of the Common Market do not see these enablers as foundational in relation to their importance to implementation. Thus, this sets the new framework apart from other literature that looks at the EAC Common Market or its implementation.

### 6.1 The Framework for Enhancing CMP Implementation

The following are the components that form the framework to enhance the implementation of the EAC Common Market protocol:

- i. Understanding the key enablers as pre-requisites for CMP Implementation. From the findings, these prerequisites include sanction mechanism, funding, research, anti-corruption, CMP laws, public participation, automated processes and the EAC decision-making model (Figure 7);
- ii. Identifying any achievements to provide an understanding of where the region is in terms of implementation. The findings indicate the EAC passport, the customs union, free movement of goods, people, and workers as some of the key achievements. At present, there is poor domestication of achievements in the EAC which misleads member states on the actual achievements making this a critical step;
- iii. Highlighting the challenges affecting the implementation process. The findings indicate political leadership, poor physical infrastructure and divergent laws as the major challenges;

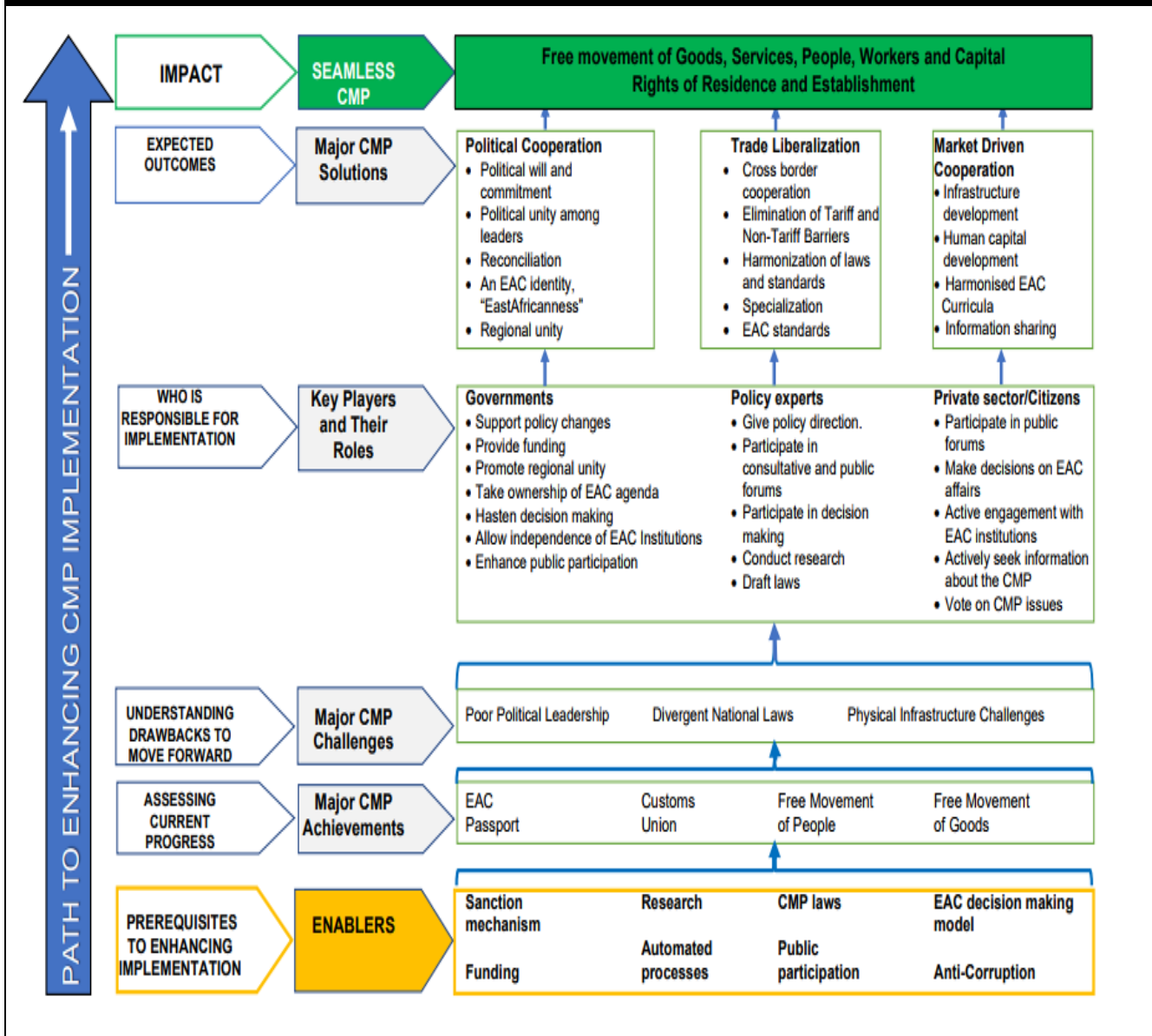
- iv. Assigning responsibilities to identified role players who can help guide the process and lead to CMP implementation. The present findings indicate governments, policymakers, citizens and the private sector as integral role players;
- v. Indicating the expected outcomes stemming from the solutions of the present research. At this point, the implementation of the CMP will be realized. Some of the expected outcomes according to the present research are Trade liberalization, reconciliation, human resource development, market-driven cooperation and the principle of subsidiarity;
- vi. The impact of reaching the expected outcomes would be a seamless CMP that allows for the free movements of people, workers, services, goods, capital, and rights of residence and establishment.

#### *6.1.1 Where the Framework Can Be Implemented*

The present research was conducted in the East African Community and the region can benefit from this framework. The East African Community has been working towards ensuring that there is free movement of goods, services, workers, capital, people and rights of establishment and residence.

The research notes that all the rights and freedoms are facing challenges thereby affecting the implementation of the Common Market Protocol. Moreover, other regional trading blocs can use the new framework as a guideline to resolve issues related to implementation in their common markets. The findings suggest that in Africa, the EAC seems to be the most advanced regional bloc closely followed by ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States). Thus, this could be useful for other blocs in ensuring the implementation of seamless common markets across the African continent and other progressive regional blocs around the world. Currently, the newly formed African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) working towards the implementation of a free trade area across the African continent could benefit from this framework.

**Figure 7**  
**Framework for Enhancement**  
**Implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol**



Source: Ntara, C (2020)

### 6.1.2 How the Framework Can Be Implemented

From the findings, for the framework to succeed, the support of regional governments, EAC ministries, private sector regional bodies and participating organizations, citizens and EAC institutions across the region is critical. The findings suggest that government support is important for the CMP to succeed. Thus, EAC institutions such as the EAC

secretariat could be tasked with the implementation process while engaging other stakeholders. However, regional governments can show their support by allowing the independence of institutions, enhancing citizen participation, private sector involvement, and offering support to key enablers for tangible success to be seen.

## 6.2 Contribution to Knowledge

The framework for enhancing the implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol introduces new thinking in line with practical application towards CMP implementation. The research explored the literature and methodological gaps, as well as the gaps in international business research. In arriving at the framework, the present research looked at all aspects of the CMP, used a sample of three countries, used mixed-methods research, and collected primary data. This approach added to the expansive view of International Business in the understudied emerging interaction paradigm.

Furthermore, to the best knowledge of the researcher following the review of literature, the present research is the first to use interpretative phenomenology in interrogating the implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol. The evidence generated by experts based on their experiences proved useful in the present research. The research brought together a combination of dominant themes that were used in the formulation of the framework to enhance CMP implementation. The framework does not substitute theory or current practice in regional integration but augments the already existing practices and theories. However, the present research identifies weaknesses in the current practices and provides insights on how CMP implementation can be enhanced based on the Ntara Framework. First, the EAC treaty is one of the main working documents that guide the implementation of the Common Market Protocol. A deeper analysis indicates that the treaty leaves some facets identified in the present research without clarity on practical application. Some of these include an EAC identity, a sanction mechanism, independence of EAC institutions, and failure to clearly define the applicability and scope of the principle of variable geometry (EAC Treaty, 2000). Secondly, the Protocol for the establishment of the Common Market in its interpretations fails to clarify the need for key implementation enablers such as a sanction mechanism, independence of EAC institutions, decision making on common market issues, and an EAC identity (East African Community, 2009). The common view among respondents was that there are challenges and, in many cases, resolving them is difficult because key working documents do not provide direction.

### *6.2.1 The Theory of Enhanced Common Market Implementation*

The theory of enhancing CMP Implementation stems from an in-depth review of the literature, an analysis of data from respondents, and content analysis of the practical application in the implementation of the Common Market Protocol. The concentration of International Business scholarship on the eclectic, extension and cross border paradigms led to theoretical gaps at the supra-societal level of inquiry. As a result, there are no theories to guide the implementation of critical regional integration initiatives. The theory brings together implementation enablers, the progress of implementation, drawbacks of implementation, role players, their responsibilities, the expected outcomes and the impact.

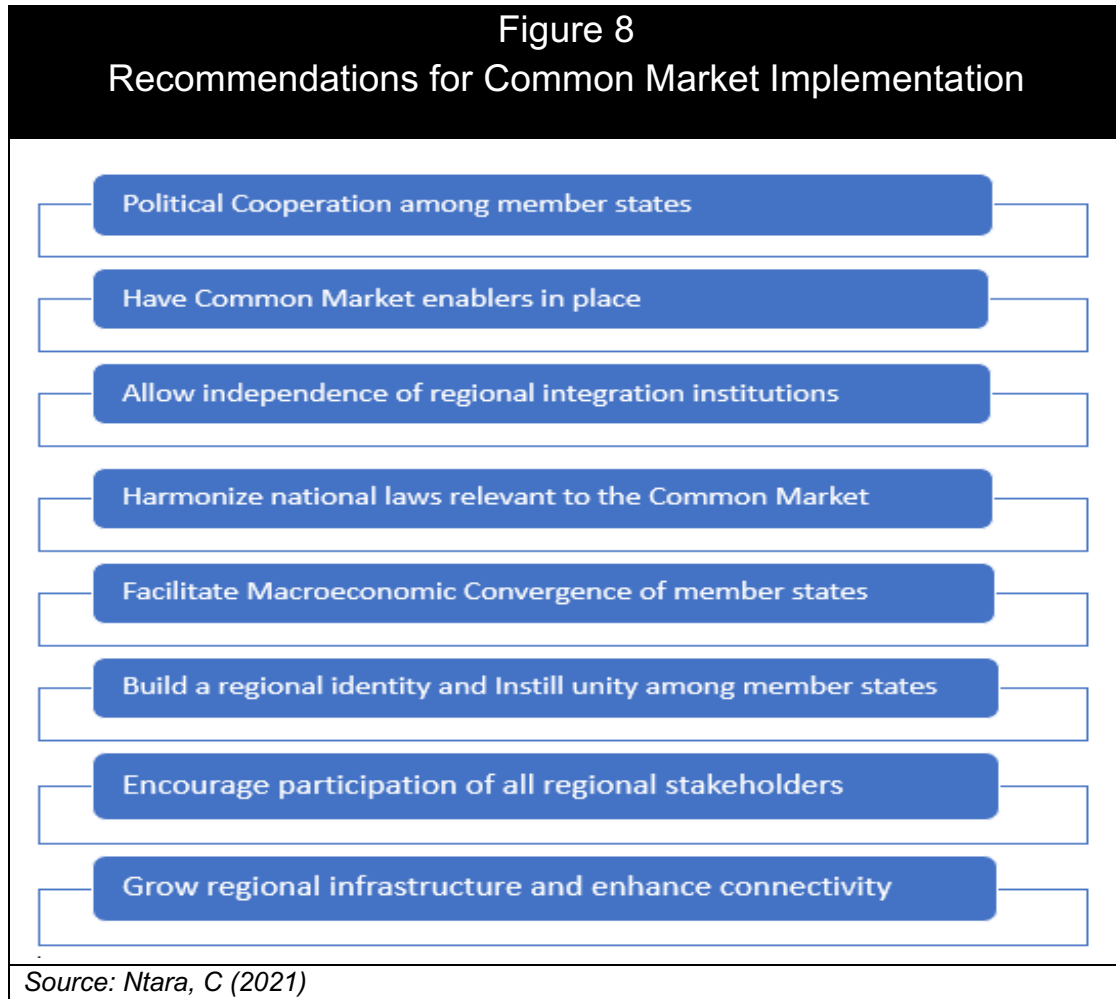
## **7. Conclusions**

The East African Community intends to actualize the Common Market Protocol to grow regional economies. Research by Nyandemo (2012) and The World Bank (2020) shows that regional integration is expected to stimulate the economic growth of partner states by helping them overcome impediments to the flow of people, capital, goods, services, and ideas. To achieve this end, the collaboration of nations in eradicating barriers to the transfer of factors of production such as labour, capital, goods and services is important (Aloo, 2017). Following a detailed analysis of the research findings, the results have revealed the new framework meant to enhance the implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol. The enablers, major achievements, challenges, key players, and their roles and solutions to CMP implementation and impact of implementation have been identified and listed. Through an in-depth examination of the literature, it is believed that the present research is the first comprehensive research focused on the implementation of the Common Market Protocol in the East African Community. The framework for CMP enhancement provides a guideline that key EAC stakeholders can use towards achieving a seamless common market from the point of understanding of key enablers, current progress, drawbacks, key players, their roles and the solutions (expected outcomes). Moreover, the academic knowledge is congruent with the real-world application in regional integration. Consequently, by incorporating literature on CMP implementation, key EAC documents and present findings, the research provides insights on how the EAC can turn its CMP implementation challenges into solutions for a seamless common market.

### **7.1 Recommendations to Enhance Implementation of Common Markets**

The developed framework for enhanced common market implementation presents recommendations that can be applied immediately by key stakeholders.





It is hoped that key stakeholders seeking to implement common markets can benefit from these recommendations (Figure 8).

## 7.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The research notes that past research in International Business has not employed the use of phenomenology. The majority of researchers use secondary data and concentrate on other research methodologies. This limits the growth of International Business inquiry causing researchers to depend on other fields such as management for their choice of methodology. Phenomenology proved useful in the present research and highlighted critical issues from lived experiences of the regional trade experts. Thus, future research in International Business can fill this gap by adding to the studies on International Business inquiry using phenomenology.

The present research proposes that similar studies be conducted in other regional blocs in Africa such as SADC and ECOWAS. This will shed light on the achievements and challenges to the implementation process and further provide solutions. As Africa commenced with the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) from January 2021, understanding current challenges affecting cross-border trade and the issues faced in a common market and their solutions will enhance trade and make the continent a true free trade area.

The present research notes that agreements and laws specific to the Common Market protocol need to be established. As there cannot be one blanket law for the CMP, the present research proposes that future research be conducted to highlight the specific laws and agreements that member states need to work on to fast-track the implementation of the CMP. These laws and agreements would offer a guideline for future decisions and discussions regarding the CMP. Filling this gap will make it easier to enforce laws agreed upon by member states and positively influence a seamless Common Market.

In conclusion, regional economic blocs around the world cannot boast of full implementation. It is not feasible to have a fully implemented Common Market but the EAC and other similar trading blocs can be implemented as much as is practicable and as seamlessly as possible. It is expected that the findings of this research will provide a roadmap through which key EAC stakeholders can work towards CMP implementation. Other regional blocs can also learn from the EAC experience. As CMP implementation challenges persist, the untapped potential of the EAC remains.

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