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Foreign Trade and Nigerian Economy

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Abstract
Globalization theoretically leads countries to increase their production and consumption levels and as well ensures prosperity in line with benefits accruable from foreign trade. Foreign trade has been adjudged by many a scholar as an engine with potentials to propel an economy to desired growth as it affords the opportunities to new products, to explore new techniques, to enhance communication and a considerable positive role in the business life. This study is an empirical reassessment of the impact of foreign trade on Nigerian economy with a time series data from 1981 to 2013. The regressors conformed to a priori expectations while export (EX) alone passed the test of significance. The F-test suggests that the joint influence of the explanatory variables is statistically significant and Jarque-Bera normality test also implies that the residual is normally distributed. The non-statistical significance of most of the variables points to the relatively weak diversified Nigerian economy with the dominance of the petroleum sector. Consequently, further opening of the economy needs to be halted else it will retard the growth of the economy. In order to promote growth and development, conscious efforts should be made in the formulation of policies to create enabling environment that will promote non-oil exports, ensure growth induced imports and promote the use of local raw materials.
Keywords: Foreign trade, Economic growth, Export, Import, Exchange rate, Policies

1.1 Introduction

Countries trade with each other to obtain things that are of better quality or less expensive or simply different from the goods and services produced at home (Gonnelli, 1993). Foreign trade and trade policies have been on the focus among relevant national issues throughout much of history; its economic, social and political importance has been on the rise and it has been an area of interest to decision makers, policy makers as well as analysts. Apparently, a number of developing countries in recent decades most notably the east Asian (Tigers) newly industrializing countries have been able to purposefully use the elemental forces of trade to boost growth and development within a relatively short time span. Foreign trade as pointed by Frankel and Romer (1999) has been identified as an instrument and driver of economic growth. This is so because trade enhances the efficient production of goods and services through allocation of resources to countries that have comparative advantage in their production. In addition, its impact on a country's economy is not limited to the quantitative gains, but also structural changes in the economy and facilitates the international capital flow.

The basis of foreign trade rests on the fact that nations of the world differ in their resource endowment, preferences, technology, scale of production and capacity for growth and development. Moreover such trade may result in facilitating more diffusion of knowledge that will enhance efficiency of inputs which will translate into manufactured outputs that will in turn give way for economic development. In any of these cases, international trade can be described as an engine of growth (Hogendorn, 1996, Cypher and Dietz, 1997). To act as an instrument of growth, trade must lead to steady improvement in human conditions by expanding the range of people's choice, a notion that the concept of human development tries to capture (Oviemuno, 2007).

Notable institutions and organisations like OECD, IMF, European Union, World Bank, etc. are insistent on their support for international trade, arguing that prosperity has rarely, if ever been sustained without trade. However, this view must be followed with caution because foreign trade targets the promotion of economic growth but despite the contribution of foreign trade to the growth of developing countries such as Nigeria, it has led to international inequality whereby the rich trading countries get richer at the expense of the poor countries. In addition, further reasons for the changing perception of trade are thus, the lack of tangible benefits to most developing countries from opening their economies, despite the well-publicized claims of export and income gains, according to Aja (1996) as cited in Anowor *et al*. (2013), which antagonists argue that it is even lesser than economic losses and social disorder rapid trade liberalization has caused many developing countries; they also argue that trade liberalization has led to growing inequalities of wealth, technology, decreasing opportunities both in home and the international community, and the perception that environmental, social and cultural problems have been worsened by the workings of free trade economy. Furthermore, Nigeria despite the successive report of rapid growth brought about by foreign trade, economic growth has not been fully and effectively achieved due to over dependence on import and less of export. To this conclusion, what kind of standard should be adopted for upgrading the exportation of goods and services in Nigeria? To what extent should Nigerian involvement in foreign trade influence productivity and promote employment opportunities? The objective of this study thus becomes an empirical reassessment of the impact of foreign trade on Nigerian economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Expositions

International trade brings welfare and efficiency gains to all countries irrespective of their initial conditions, level of development, technological abilities and natural resources endowments (Krugman and Helpman, 1988). Foreign trade has been and is today an economic force that has spurred commerce, promoted technology and growth, spread cultural patterns, stimulate exploration and colonization, and frequently fanned the flames of war (Oviemuno, 2007). The classical economists provided the framework that shaped subsequent explanation and analysis of foreign trade (Wexler, 1979).

Among some trade theories include:

a) Mercantilist Trade Theory

The Mercantilists provided the earlier idea on foreign trade which spanned between 1500 and 1800. The doctrine was highly nationalistic and considered the welfare of the nation as of prime importance. According to the theory, the most important way for a nation to become rich and powerful is to export more than she imports; and by acquiring precious metals such as gold. They urged their government to control trade by the imposition of tariffs, quotas and prohibition this is in order to control import and maintain favourable trade balance. Also the need for regulation to maintain order in human affairs and economic affairs were taking for granted. It was therefore argued that the policies of the mercantilists carried the seeds of their own destruction and this brought about the criticisms by Adam Smith.

b) The Absolute Advantage Theory.

From Adam Smith (1723-1790) came the absolute advantage theory with which he criticized the mercantilist ideas on three points; the definition of wealth, the doctrine of state building and the possibility that one could continuously accumulate boards of treasure. He brought forward the following points: wealth did not consist in money or in gold or silver but in what money could purchase, thus true wealth of a nation is not measured in treasure but in its production of goods and services; government intervention in the economy could only hamper economic development, therefore government should reduce its role so that the economy could expand as rapidly as possible; when treasure flowed into the country in an endless stream in form of gold and silver coins and bullion the amount of money in circulation would increase and with more money available and no changes in the quantity of goods, prices would rise and foreign buyers would find the country's goods less attractive causing the country's exports to fall. This theory therefore proposed that two countries would benefit from trade if the countries involved would specialize in the production of goods in which they have absolute advantage and trade with each other.

c) Comparative Advantage Theory

Smith's Absolute advantage theory did not explain the case where a country has absolute advantage in the production of all goods than all other countries; the country will simply refuse to trade. David Ricardo (1772 – 1823) tackled this question by demonstrating that external trade arises not from difference in absolute advantage but from difference in comparative advantage. The comparative advantage theory states that a country will gain from trade if she specializes in the production of a specific commodity in which she uses a lower opportunity cost than her trading partner (Gbosi 2003).

d) The theory of international value or the theory of Reciprocal demand;

John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873) accepted Ricardo's labor theory of value and restated his doctrine of comparative cost advantage more clearly. He also tackled the question of international value or the ratios at which the commodities exchange for one another internationally by formulating his theory in terms of comparative advantage or comparative effectiveness of labor as contrasted with Ricardo's comparative labor cost. Thus instead of assuming a given level of output of each commodity in two countries with labor cost different he took output as given the amount of labor in each country but different levels of output. The theory of reciprocal demand by implication is the relative strength and elasticity of the demand of the two trading countries for each other's product.

e) Hecksher – Ohlin Trade Theory

Hecksher and Ohlin addressed the two issues that the Ricardian theory could not satisfactory explain; why comparative costs of producing various commodities differ as between different countries or what factors determine the comparative advantaged and what effect does foreign trade have on the factor incomes in the trading nations. This theory is of the view that countries could be ranked by their factor endowment. The model also identified difference in pre-trade product prices between nations as the immediate basis for trade (Usman, 2011).

2.2 Empirical Review

Many a reasonable number of research works and theoretical models suppose international trade to enhance economic growth. They suggest several chains through which a higher trade shares positively influence on income per capita. Obviously, this argument concerning the role of exports and imports as one of the main

deterministic factors of economic growth is not new. A number of studies, using different approaches, have found growth to be enhanced by trade openness, or liberalization, see Romer (1990), and Asher (1970). Massel *et al.* (1972) upon investigating the pattern of economic growth of selected developing countries using regression methods observed a high degree of association between exports and economic growth. They suggested that countries should aim at 2.5 percent expansion in export activities to obtain one percent increase in economic performance.

Ghezakos (1973) as cited in Usman (2011) tested the effect of instability on economic growth of 18 developed and 50 less developed countries separately. The growth rate of exports receipts has positive effect in explaining the growth rate of real per capita income. Shuchin (1979) maintains that exports are the major dynamic factor in determining the level of general economic activity in most primary exporting countries. He also argues that if the developing countries do not develop their export, it might mean slow economic growth. Grossman and Helpman (1991) demonstrated the importance of imports of foreign technology in the growth process of a country. They explained that the importation of foreign equipments creates a more efficient production system, increases productive capacity, global output, technological capacity development and economic growth. In another study, Wah (2004) reported that for the past four decades (1961-2000), the Malaysian economy grow at an impressive average rate of 6.8 percent per annum. The rapid growth was attributed in part to the export-oriented industrialization policy. Dollar and Kraay (2001), using data of 100 countries found that changes in growth rates are highly correlated with changes in trade volumes.

Fosu (1990) and Sach and Warner (1997), through studies on various African countries, agreed that trade restriction impact negatively on growth. Kaberuka et al. (2014) carried out a study on the validity of export-led growth hypothesis in Uganda using Cointegration and Error-Correction Model; the study also tested causal relationships between total labour force and exports and found that trade liberalization had a negative but insignificant impact while total labour force Granger-causes total exports in the post-trade liberalization period only and recommended that further opening of the economy be halted as this was found to retard the growth of the economy. These outcomes support the argument by Subasat (2002) as cited in Onodugo *et al.* (2013) that export promotion does not have any significant impact on economic growth of low income countries.

In the Nigerian context, many researchers have examined the performance of the foreign trade and economic growth for instance; Obadan and Okojie (2010) conclude that only openness to trade contributes positively to economic growth. Also, Obadan and Okojie (2010) drawing a sample from 43 countries (including Nigeria) reported a positive relationship between average growth rate of GDP over 1960 to 1967 period. Fajana (1979) in his work shows that export have more impact on growth than foreign capital.

Ogbokor (2001) investigated the macroeconomic impact of oil exports in the economy of Nigeria. Utilizing the popular OLS technique, his observations was that growth reacted in a predictable fashion to changes in the regressors used in the study, he also found that a 10% increase in oil exports would lead to 5.2 percent jump in economic growth. He concluded that export-oriented strategies should be given a more practical support. Fajana (1979) in his study on Nigerian economy investigated the link between trade and growth via quantitative methods and noted that a strong positive relationship exists between export and output changes. His results also suggested that exports have a more significant impact on the economic performance of Nigeria vis-a-vis foreign capital flow.

Oviemuno (2007) researched on international trade as an engine of growth in developing countries (1908-2003) using export, import, inflation, and exchange rate as his explanatory variables. He concluded that the entire variable does not act as an engine of economic growth in Nigeria. This was corroborated by Usman (2011), who examined the performance evaluation of foreign trade and economic growth in Nigeria. His finding using five important variables including export, import, economic openness, exchange rate and per capital income shows that all the above listed variables does not act as an instrument of growth in Nigeria. In a related view, Onodugo *et al.* (2013) adopted the Augmented Production Function (APF), employing the Endogenous Growth Model to carry out a time series econometric investigation on non-oil export and economic growth in Nigeria and their findings revealed a very weak and infinitesimal impact of non-oil export in influencing rate of change in level of economic growth in Nigeria.

3.1 Model Specification

In this study, our hypothesis is maintained on the assumption that economic growth in a developing country like Nigeria is determined by growth in foreign trade. The variables in our model are Real Gross Domestic Product (RGDP), Export (EX), Import (IMP), Exchange Rate (EXR), and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) with data from 1981 to 2013.

RGDP = f (EX, IMP, EXR, FDI) …… (1)

Where:

RGDP = Real Gross Domestic Product
EX = Volume of Export

IMP = Volume of Import
EXR = Exchange rate
FDI = Foreign Direct Investment

For easy estimation and computation, (1) is transformed into (2)
The model is explained in linear function as:

$RGDP = \psi_0 + \psi_1 EX + \psi_2 IMP + \psi_3 EXR + \psi_4 FDI + U_t$…….. (2)

Taking the log transformation of (2) to form (3)

$LogRGDP = \psi_0 + \psi_1 LogEX + \psi_2 LogIMP + \psi_3 LogEXR + \psi_4 LogFDI + \tilde{\omega}_t$…….. (3)

4.1 Result Presentation

Table 4.1: Unit Root Statistics

Variables	ADF	5%	1%	Lag	Order of Integration
DLRGDP	-5.2827**	-1.963	-2.695	0	I(1)
DLEX	-6.1793**	-1.963	-2.695	0	I(1)
DLIMP	-4.3235**	-1.963	-2.695	0	I(1)
DLEXR	-4.0297**	-1.963	-2.695	0	I(1)
DLFDI	-4.5983**	-1.963	-2.695	0	I(1)

** ADF stationary at 5% and 1% critical values. **Source:** Authors' computation

4.2 Co-integration Analysis

The unit root results conducted above have significant implications for the co integration analysis. The residual co-integration approach, which requires the variables to be integrated of order one, can be implemented. Therefore, in the event that RGDP has an identical order of integration with any of the explanatory variables, we suspect co-integration. We thus run a linear combination of these variables in their level form without the intercept and then test their residual for unit roots. If the residual is integrated, co-integration is established and the model estimated using the ECM given by:

Table 4.2: Co-Integration Result

Residual	t-ADF	5% critical value	1% critical value
Residual	-1.6718	-1.972	-2.56
Residual	-1.4953	-1.972	-2.56

Source: Authors' computation

From the table above we observed that the values of t-ADF is in absolute term lesser than the two critical values (5% and 1%), and this therefore, show no presence of co-integration, because the residual obtain from the linear combination of the variable in question was not stationary while the series that generates the residual were stationary.

The implication of the above result is that we can conduct estimate of original model without fear of co-integration.

Table 4.3: Modelling Log of RGDP by OLS

Variables	Co-efficient	Standard error	t-value	Prob.	t-tab	Decision rule	Conclusion
Constant	10.4871	2.4054	4.3594	0.0002	2.048		
Export	0.0642	0.0212	3.0261	0.0003	2.048	Reject H_0	Significant
Import	-0.0172	0.2176	-0.0790	0.9375	2.048	Accept H_0	Not Significant
Exchange rate	0.0035	0.0123	0.3422	0.7347	2.048	Accept H_0	Not Significant
FDI	0.1005	0.1160	0.8666	0.3935	2.048	Accept H_0	Not significant

Adj-R^2 = 0.7284; F- Statistics = 177.9071; $T_{0.025}$ = 2.048; $F_{0.05}$ = 2.71; DW= 2.1507.

Source: Authors' computation

4.3 Interpretations

The coefficient of determination (Adj-R^2 = 0.7284) shows that about 72.8 percent of the total variation in the dependent variable (RGDP) is explained by the variation in the explanatory variables viz: export, import, exchange rate, and foreign direct investment while the rest of 27.2 percent can be attributed to the influence of disturbance factors not included in the model which are however the stochastic variables. It showed a good fit of the explanatory power of the regression model. The test of significance showed that only the variable for export is statistically significant while that of import, exchange rate and FDI are not. This can be attributed to the

unstable nature of the economy and monotonic petroleum export, vulnerable domestic output, prevalence of capital flight, insecurity, political instability and other vices that affect both domestic and foreign investment in the real sectors. The F-test showed that the model is statistically significant.

4.3.2 Heteroscedasticity Test.

From the white test of heteroscedasticity, its calculated Obs*R-squared is 1.868646 and following the chi-square table, the tabulated x^2 under 8 degree of freedom =23.6848. From the result, $x^2_{cal} < x^2_{tab}$ (i.e. 1.868646< 23.6848).Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis implying that there is no heteroscedasticity and strictly showing that error term have a constant variance.

4.3.3 Normality test (Jargue-Bera)

This is the joint hypothesis that the Skewness and Kurtosis are 0 and 3 respectively; with this the value of the JB-statistic is expected to be 0. Under the null hypothesis that the residuals are normally distributed, the JB-statistics follows a chi-square degree of freedom.

From the regression model, the JB calculated is 92.92735 and the JB tabulated is 5.99147 which is high therefore we cannot reject H_0 which implies that the residual, a proxy for stochastic error term follow a normal distribution and is therefore normally distributed.

4.4 implications of the results

The coefficient for export presented above indicated that it has a positive relationship with RGDP which shows that a percentage increase in export earnings will bring about 6.4 percentage increase in RGDP. The co-efficient for import indicated a negative relationship with RGDP which suggest that a further percentage increase in import will lead to 1.72 percentage decline in RGDP. Also, the co-efficient for exchange rate shows it has a positive relationship with RGDP showing that a percentage increase in exchange rate will lead to 0.3 percent increase in RGDP and finally the co-efficient for FDI also shows a positive relationship with RGDP since a percentage increase in FDI will lead to 10.05 percentage increase in RGDP.

Invoking the a priori expectations, the coefficients for export and exchange rate and FDI all appeared with positive signs while import appeared with a negative indicated that all the explanatory variables are in line with theoretical expectations.

While the exchange compatibility between currencies encourages trade between countries, the FDI encourages foreign investors and the volume of a country's import relative to its export defines her trade openness. The F-test showed that the joint influence of the explanatory variables (export, import, exchange rate, FDI) on the dependent variable (RGDP) is statistically significant. This goes a long way to show that foreign trade acts as an engine of growth in Nigeria. It is also in line with the findings of Obadan and Okojie (2010) which says that the relationship between trade and growth is envisaged through an export led growth strategy following the theory that sustained trade as the main engine/driver of economic growth.

Finally having in minding the non-statistical significance of most variables and some evidence from scholars who try to prove that there is positive relationship between foreign trade and economic growth, Oviemuno (2007) and Usman (2011) in their finding proved that there is negative relationship between foreign trade and economic growth especially for relatively non-exporting countries. This obviously is possible in the case of Nigeria given that except for petroleum she is relatively a non-exporting country and as such further opening of the economy needs to be halted else it will retard the growth of the economy.

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study reassesses the relationships between RGDP and foreign trade variables and the impact of the latter on the former. Past studies showed either supportive or contrary views on the need to grow the economy through foreign trade. The explanatory variables conformed to a priori expectations but most of the variables except export did not pass the test of significant. The unit root test was carried out and it required co-integration test which showed no presence of co-integration because the residual obtain from the linear combination of the variable in question was not stationary while the series that generates the residual were stationary therefore an estimate of original model was conducted without fear of co-integration. The result of heteroscedasticity test is strictly showing that the error term have a constant variance.

In order to promote growth and development, conscious efforts should be made in the formulation of policies to create enabling environment that will promote non-oil exports, ensure growth induced imports and promote the use of local raw materials. Nigeria really needs to diversify her export from petroleum dominance to enjoy the real benefits of foreign trade. The linkage between the academic and research institutes should be encouraged that industrial and manufacturing could be exposed to enhanced and improved technologies. Foreign trade policies should encourage domestic production to promote exports. Notably the nation will gain little or nothing from unguided exchange rate deregulation as merely exporter of mostly crude oil and other primary products with inelastic foreign demand. This study also recommends a conducive environment that ensures security of lives and property, checks and discourages capital flight, political stability and others that will

promote both domestic and foreign investment in the real sectors. Finally policy makers need to increase the pace of transformation of the agricultural sector and strengthen the sector's weak link to industry, where outputs from agriculture can be used as inputs in industries by so doing would spur equitable growth and reduce high unemployment.

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