



AN IDENTIFICATION OF MAIN CHALLENGES IN CREATING A REGIONAL INTEGRATION INDEX FOR REGIONAL ORGANIZATION AND WAYS OF OVERCOMING THEM

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ABSTRACT

African regional Integration has been facing several ideological challenges among which include economics, political social and cultural ideological drives to regional Integration. The manifestation of these ideologies has also continued to influence regional organizations technical functioning. Therefore in response towards reducing these challenges in this paper, an identification of four main challenges in creating a regional integration index for regional organization and ways of overcoming them is presented. Furthermore in paper, four main solutions to the identified challenges to creating an efficient regional integration index will be introduced. These challenges will include among the following; Social- technology variations, (Social); wrong timing of indicator development and political influence from governments; (Political); money to facilitate the whole indicator creation process, (Economic); failed grass root participation and engagement in developing the indicators, (others). In addition, Justification to the applicability and solutions proposed respectively to the challenges will be presented to overcome the identified challenges. Lastly a way forward towards guaranteeing an efficient regional integration index aimed at creation efficient regional organizations function in Africa will be discussed.

Key Words: Regional Integration, Index, Regional Organization.

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INTRODUCTION

Regional Integration Index is a system that shows or provides a list of various indicators to be compared with others in levels of importance/preference. This is aimed towards the promotion or prohibiting of regional integration or regional organizations efficiency. To best understand a dimensional approach to development as a drive force to regional integration, the Regional integration evaluation (RIE) methodology provides a framework of a four approaches that includes; economic, political, social and technological. The central idea behind the RIE methodology as adopted for this work is that of conceptualizing indicators from the broader dimensional understanding of regional development challenges to explain related specific correlating indicators for regional organization efficiency.¹

First, as Devlin and French-Davis (1998) pointed out, the methodological problems related to counterfactual analysis are particularly important: (i) the more complex the studied process is, (ii) the longer the time period considered, (iii) the bigger the changes involved, and (iv) the more the analysis turns on exact magnitudes. Most of these items apply in the case of magnifying the challenges of creating a regional integration index or related integration studies. Secondly, the right balance between quantitative indicators is derived from the RIE method while a qualitative assessment is provided in this paper to expound on the challenges of the aggregated factors of Integration such as economic, political, social etc.²

Methodology ADB Working Paper Series on Regional Economic Integration No. 49; p.6

² Devlin, R and French.D 1998, *Towards an Evaluation of Regional Integration in Latin America in the 1990s, Working Paper*, INTAL, (2). Dobson, W. (1991), "Economic Policy Coordination: Requiem or Prologue?" *Policy Analyses in International Economics*, (30).

¹ Donghyun.,P and Mario A, 2010, *A New Multi-Dimensional Framework for Analyzing Regional Integration: Regional Integration Evaluation (RIE)*

In relation to the above, challenges in creating a regional integration index in relation to the regional integration evaluation methodology is not limited to the broader concept of economic, political, social and technology factors but rather the indicators of these factors as illustrated bellow with in this paper.

GOAL

The main goal of this work is to identify four challenges in creating a regional integration index for regional organizations and propose possible ways of overcoming them.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative desktop methodology with an analysis method of utilizing content analysis is utilized to find varying distinctions with indicators that could be derived from the RIE methodology factors such as the economic, political, social and technologically based challenges faced in the process of creating the integration index.

STRUCTURE OR PLAN OF WORK

The layout of the whole work is structured in six parts; the first part provides the introduction to the whole work. Secondly, the explanation of the main goal of the study is made. Thirdly the methodology selected for the paper is presented.

Fifth, a detailed challenge to the indicator creation for regional integration Index for the regional organization are examines there applicability in relation to proposed solutions are made and lastly a way forward is made to overcome the identified challenges.

1. Challenges in creating a regional Integration Index for regional Organization and related indicators.

For this paper, social- technological variations, timing indicator development and political influence government, Money to facilitate the whole indicator creation process, failed grass root participation and engagement in developing the indicators are the selected main challenges and corresponding ways to overcome them. The details of the challenges are respectively provided in the tables below,

a) Social- technology variations, (Social).

	Indicator	Challenge	Overcoming challenge
1	Colonial masters	Francophone and Anglophone Incompatibility	Similarity search for an index creation
2	Culture variations	Tribal, religious Divide	National building
3	Language	Communication barriers	Language orientation for realities articulation
4	Technological differences	Divide in technological knowledge of the tools	Shared tool orientation

Table developed by Kabanda Umar, 2017; Indicators to social- technological variations challenge.³

³ Kabanda Umar, 2017: *Identify Four Challenges In Creating A Regional Integration Index For Regional*

b) Wrong timing of indicator development and political influence from governments, (Political).

	Indicator	Challenge	Overcoming challenge
1	Corruption	Misuse of money for index development	Mechanization of financial records flow
2	Overstay in Government	Personalization of institutions	Institutionalization
3	Over dependence on donors	Dictation of donor ways	Development of regional capital base
4	High rates of citizen demonstration	Disorganization of the social stratum	Search for stable times for index creation.

Table developed by Kabanda Umar, 2017; Wrong timing of indicator development and political influence from governments as a challenge.⁴

c) Money to facilitate the whole indicator creation process, (Economic).

	Indicator	Challenge	Overcoming challenge
1	Money	Inability to facilitate index creators No commitment	Fundraising for the index creation process

Table developed by Kabanda Umar, 2017; Money to facilitate the whole indicator creation process⁵

d) Failed grass root participation and engagement in developing the indicators, (others).

	Indicator	Challenge	Overcoming challenge
1	Poor modality of citizen participation	Ignorance of realities of beneficiaries	Community driven involvement of index beneficialize
2	Distrust among states	Reduced government role in sensitizing its citizens	Increase in the building of trust among states

Table developed by Kabanda Umar, 2017; Failed grass root participation and engagement in developing the indicators, (others)⁶

Organization. Discuss Ways Of Overcoming Them. Pan African University.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Kabanda Umar, 2017: *Identify Four Challenges In Creating A Regional Integration Index For Regional Organization. Discuss Ways Of Overcoming Them.* Pan African University.

2. Justification to the applicability and solutions proposed to overcome the identified challenges

The four Identified Challenges in Creating a Regional Integration Index for Regional Organization and ways of overcoming them as presented above in the tables are justified below respectively;

a) **Social- technology variations, (Social).**

Similarity search for an index creation, Institutionalization, Language orientation for realities articulation, Shared tool orientation towards index development would be the indicators followed to overcome Social- technology variations.

In relation to the proposed indicators above, Aghion and Williamson assert that effects in one country being more developed than others, evokes the fall in real wages, increased unemployment among the low skilled labor force, limited training of unskilled and low labor productivity, while in a more develop country in the integration block is usually outsourcing and with increased trade and a high positive impacts on employment, productivity, technology transfer and living standards. Hence the failure to contextualize these realities in the creation of regional Integration indicators challenges the whole process.⁷

b) **Wrong timing of indicator development and political influence from governments, (Political).**

Qobo argues that "political rather than economic considerations set in motion the process of regionalization in Southern Africa". In addition, the regional body took cognizance of the fact that economic developments can only be realized through a concerted effort; hence the member states saw regional integration as the gateway to economic development within the region.⁸

c) **Money to facilitate the whole indicator creation process, (Economic).**

It was noted with regret that Africa's investment climate is yet to become attractive even to its own citizens. It is estimated between \$400bn to \$600 billion of African funds are invested outside the continent. It is a real challenge to find ways of bringing that money back to Africa. If the promotion of Africa-owned and Africa-led development agenda is to earn credibility⁹

d) **Failed grass root participation and engagement in developing the indicators, (others).**

Community driven involvement of index beneficiary Increase in the building of trust among states are identified indicators to overcome failed grass root participation and engagement in developing of a regional integration index

According to Rafter Sass Ferguson and Sarah T. Lovell (2015), in their study on grass root engagement, they

⁷ Aghion, P. and J. G. Williamson (1998): "*Growth, Inequality and Globalization: Theory, History and Policy*", Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁸ Qobo M "Regional integration, trade and conflict in Sothern Africa' (2007) *South African Institute for International Affairs* 15.

⁹ Policy Brief, *Meeting the Challenges of Regional Integration, Intra-African Trade and Economic Growth in Africa*; World bank

state that their findings complicate both cultural and material explanations of environmental action, as well as highlight the importance of multiple dimensions of participation as well as the multiple levels and locations through which social forces shape grassroots participation while developing regional indicators. If this is not overcome, in this paper it is anticipated to challenge regional integration index creation.¹⁰

3. Way forward

Adequate monitoring tools for index creation towards regional integration processes would allow better (Regional) policy design and implementation, better scrutiny and prioritization of participation by all stakeholders, affected groups and individuals, as well as permit more in depth academic analysis of the faced challenges as presented in this paper. The aim of this paper was to explore the conceptual and methodological aspects related to building an index for regional integration. We have tried to demonstrate that there are multiple and interconnected issues to be considered and that choice need to be made, related to:

- the kind of users and producers involved in its design;
- the underlying concepts and theories;
- the scope of the system and level(s) of analysis;
- the adequate selection and organization of the variables;
- the balance between quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments;
- The "correct" observation and construction of indicators.

Future attempts to implement monitoring tools for regional integration index creation launch at the regional, interregional or supranational levels, will require due consideration of these issues raised and answers to the questions posed. The attempts will only have a chance to succeed if conceptual, technical, political, institutional and organizational aspects are simultaneously addressed as proposed in the overcoming sections in the tables above.

¹⁰ Ferguson, R. S., and S. T. Lovell. 2015. *Grassroots engagement with transition to sustainability: diversity and modes of participation in the international permaculture movement*. *Ecology and Society* 20(4):39. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ES-08048-200439>, at 7:33pm