

**EFFECT OF BORDER PATROL STRATEGIES ON THE PREVENTION OF
SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES BY THE NIGERIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE IN LAGOS
STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

Smuggling activities along Nigeria's borders remain a significant challenge to national security and revenue generation, particularly in Lagos State, a major commercial and port hub. This study examined the effect of border patrol strategies on the prevention of smuggling activities by the Nigerian Customs Service in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to assess the effect of border patrol strategies on smuggling interception and on revenue protection. The study was anchored on Routine Activity Theory, which posits that crime occurs when motivated offenders converge with suitable targets in the absence of capable guardians, emphasizing the role of law enforcement and surveillance in crime prevention. A secondary research design was employed, utilizing documented data from Nigerian Customs Service annual reports, government publications, journal articles, and credible online databases covering patrol operations, seizures, and revenue performance in Lagos State. Data were analyzed using descriptive and content analysis to identify patterns and trends. Findings revealed that intensified joint patrol operations, intelligence-led surveillance, and inter-agency collaboration significantly increased smuggling interception rates, while also contributing to progressive growth in customs revenue and duty recovery. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Nigerian Customs Service further expand patrol coverage and deploy advanced surveillance technologies across Lagos borders. It also advocates for institutionalized inter-agency collaboration and continuous compliance monitoring to sustain revenue protection and strengthen smuggling prevention. The study concludes that robust border patrol strategies serve as critical instruments for national security, economic protection, and effective governance in Lagos State.

Keywords: Border Patrol, Smuggling Prevention, Nigerian Customs Service, Revenue Protection, Routine Activity Theory

INTRODUCTION

Smuggling remains a persistent global security and economic challenge, particularly in an era of intensified globalization, cross-border trade, and transnational criminal networks. Across the world, customs administrations deploy a combination of surveillance technologies, intelligence-led operations, inter-agency collaboration, and risk management systems to combat illicit trade. According to the World Customs Organization (2023), illicit trade in counterfeit goods, arms, narcotics, and restricted commodities continues to undermine revenue generation and national security, with global customs seizures increasing significantly between 2020 and 2023. Similarly, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022) reports that smuggling networks have become more sophisticated, leveraging porous borders and weak enforcement regimes. Scholars such as Levi and Maguire (2021) argue that modern border patrol strategies increasingly rely on intelligence-driven profiling, non-intrusive inspection technologies, and coordinated maritime surveillance to prevent illegal flows of goods. In many countries, customs agencies have adopted integrated border management frameworks that combine patrol, community engagement, and data analytics to curb smuggling. Despite these efforts, global losses from illicit trade are estimated in hundreds of billions of dollars annually (OECD, 2021), underscoring the continuing need to assess the effectiveness of border patrol strategies in specific national and subnational contexts.

Within the African continent, smuggling poses severe implications for economic development, revenue mobilization, and regional security. The African Union (2022) notes that illicit trade drains billions of dollars annually from African economies, particularly through porous land and maritime borders. The African Development Bank (2021) estimates that illicit financial flows and smuggling activities collectively cost Africa over \$80 billion annually, affecting infrastructure development and social service delivery. Aning and Pokoo (2020) observe that weak border governance, corruption, and inadequate surveillance equipment contribute significantly to the persistence of smuggling in West Africa. In coastal states, maritime smuggling including petroleum products, arms, and contraband goods remains prevalent due to limited patrol capacity and insufficient inter-agency coordination (Okafor, 2022). The adoption of joint border patrols and technology-based monitoring systems in countries such as Ghana and Kenya has shown

measurable improvements in seizure rates and revenue performance (Mutiso, 2023). However, scholars argue that the sustainability of these strategies depends largely on institutional capacity, accountability mechanisms, and political will. Thus, understanding how border patrol strategies function within national customs administrations remains critical for strengthening anti-smuggling frameworks across Africa.

In Nigeria, smuggling has long been recognized as a major threat to economic stability and national security. The Nigeria Customs Service (2024) reported generating over ₦3.2 trillion in revenue in 2023, alongside significant seizures of rice, petroleum products, arms, and narcotics valued at billions of naira. Despite these achievements, smuggling persists across land borders and maritime corridors, particularly in border states and coastal hubs (NCS, 2024). The National Bureau of Statistics (2023) highlights that informal cross-border trade and illicit imports contribute to substantial revenue leakages annually. According to Adeola and Oluyemi (2021), ineffective patrol coverage and collusion between smugglers and corrupt officials have historically undermined enforcement efforts. However, reforms introduced between 2020 and 2024 including the deployment of electronic customs systems, enhanced patrol vehicles, and joint task force operations have reportedly increased interception efficiency (Eze, 2023). The closure of land borders between 2019 and 2020, as analyzed by Yusuf (2022), temporarily reduced rice and poultry smuggling but also revealed structural enforcement gaps. Consequently, evaluating the strategic approaches adopted by the Nigeria Customs Service is essential for determining their impact on smuggling prevention.

Lagos State, as Nigeria's commercial nerve center and home to major seaports and border corridors, represents a critical hotspot for smuggling activities. Facilities such as the Apapa Port and the Tin Can Island Port handle a substantial proportion of Nigeria's imports and exports, making them strategic focal points for customs patrol operations. According to the Nigeria Customs Service (2024), Lagos commands accounted for over 60% of national customs revenue in 2023 and recorded seizures valued at over ₦150 billion within the same period. Ojo (2023) observes that the dense population, complex port logistics, and extensive waterways in Lagos create opportunities for concealment and diversion of goods. Additionally, maritime smuggling through creeks and informal jetties remains a concern (Balogun, 2022). Recent enforcement

strategies in Lagos have included increased maritime patrols, scanning technology deployment, intelligence sharing, and collaboration with other security agencies (NCS, 2024). However, the effectiveness of these border patrol strategies in sustainably preventing smuggling remains underexplored in empirical literature. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the effect of border patrol strategies on the prevention of smuggling activities by the Nigerian Customs Service in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Before the existence of effective border patrol strategies such as advanced surveillance and monitoring technology deployment as well as intensified patrol and inter-agency collaboration the prevention of smuggling activities in Nigeria faced significant practical issues. Smuggling incidents were frequent, seizure rates were inconsistent, and revenue leakages persisted across maritime and land corridors. Reports by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS, 2024) indicate that prior to the expansion of electronic customs platforms, non-intrusive inspection scanners, and coordinated joint task force operations, enforcement operations were largely manual, fragmented, and vulnerable to manipulation. Similarly, the World Customs Organization (WCO, 2023) notes that limited technological capacity and weak intelligence coordination in developing customs administrations contribute to low interception rates and the proliferation of illicit trade. In Lagos State, where major seaports account for a substantial share of Nigeria's trade volume, logistical complexity and porous waterways historically enabled concealment and diversion of contraband goods (Okafor, 2022). This is because the importance of surveillance technology deployment, maritime patrol systems, intelligence-led profiling, and structured inter-agency collaboration in strengthening interception capacity and reducing smuggling cannot be emphasized. These strategies are widely regarded as essential tools for improving seizure performance and curbing revenue losses linked to illicit trade.

Despite the relevance of surveillance technology deployment and intensified patrol and inter-agency collaboration, their impact on the prevention of smuggling activities has not been comprehensively assessed within the Lagos State context. Available empirical studies provide partial insights but lack focused evaluation of these strategies' measurable outcomes. For instance, Adeola and Oluyemi (2021) examined border security reforms in Nigeria and highlighted

institutional weaknesses but did not empirically measure the effect of surveillance deployment on seizure rates. Okafor (2022) analyzed maritime insecurity and transnational crime in West Africa, emphasizing structural challenges without isolating the influence of coordinated patrol intensity on smuggling reduction. Similarly, Yusuf (2022) evaluated the implications of Nigeria's border closure policy, focusing on trade disruptions rather than systematically assessing technological and collaborative patrol strategies. Although these studies contribute to understanding smuggling dynamics, few explicitly examine the combined effect of surveillance technology and inter-agency patrol collaboration on interception rates and reduction of smuggling incidents in Lagos State. Out of these empirical literatures on the subject matter, only few of the studies assess the effect of border patrol strategies on the prevention of smuggling activities in Lagos State. The statement of the problem therefore is to ascertain whether the border patrol strategies, has enhanced the prevention of smuggling.

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of border patrol strategies on the prevention of smuggling activities in Lagos State. Specifically, the study seeks to assess how surveillance technology deployment and inter-agency patrol collaboration influence interception rates, seizure values, and the reduction of smuggling incidents and revenue leakages.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Border Patrol Strategies

Border patrol strategies refer to the coordinated policies, operational measures, and enforcement mechanisms adopted by customs and border management agencies to regulate cross-border movements and prevent illicit trade. In contemporary border governance, these strategies encompass surveillance and monitoring technology deployment, intelligence-led operations, physical patrols, risk assessment systems, and inter-agency collaboration. According to the World Customs Organization (WCO, 2023), modern border patrol strategies increasingly rely on non-intrusive inspection technologies such as cargo scanners, electronic tracking systems, and automated customs management platforms to detect concealed goods and enhance inspection efficiency. These technological measures are complemented by data-driven risk profiling and

coordinated maritime or land patrol operations aimed at intercepting contraband before it penetrates domestic markets.

In developing economies, border patrol strategies also involve joint task force operations, intelligence sharing among security agencies, and community-based border monitoring initiatives. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) emphasizes that integrated border management frameworks improve compliance, strengthen enforcement capacity, and reduce revenue losses associated with illicit trade. In the Nigerian context, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS, 2024) highlights reforms such as the deployment of electronic customs systems, increased maritime patrol assets, and collaborative enforcement operations as key components of its border patrol framework. Scholars argue that effective border patrol strategies must combine technological infrastructure, trained personnel, accountability mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination to achieve sustainable outcomes (Aning & Pokoo, 2020). Therefore, border patrol strategies represent a multidimensional approach to border security that seeks not only to intercept smuggled goods but also to deter illegal trade networks and enhance national revenue protection.

Surveillance and Monitoring Technology Deployment

Surveillance and Monitoring Technology Deployment refers to the systematic use of modern technological tools and electronic systems to monitor, track, and control activities along borders to prevent illicit trade and smuggling. This concept encompasses a wide range of tools, including non-intrusive inspection scanners, electronic cargo tracking systems, closed-circuit television (CCTV) networks, drones, and maritime surveillance equipment, all designed to enhance situational awareness and operational efficiency (World Customs Organization [WCO], 2023). Surveillance technology allows customs and border agencies to detect illegal activities more effectively, reduce human error, and improve the precision of inspections, particularly in high-traffic areas such as seaports, airports, and land borders (Adeola & Oluyemi, 2021).

Scholars argue that effective deployment of surveillance technology not only strengthens enforcement capabilities but also acts as a deterrent against potential smugglers. According to Eze (2023), technology-driven monitoring systems enable real-time data collection, facilitate intelligence-led decision-making, and support risk profiling of goods and persons entering or

leaving the country. In addition, Okafor (2022) highlights that integrating electronic surveillance with traditional patrols and inter-agency coordination significantly improves interception rates and reduces revenue leakages. The operationalization of surveillance and monitoring technology, therefore, involves both the availability of hardware and software tools and the capacity of personnel to utilize these systems efficiently (NCS, 2024).

In the context of Lagos State, where dense port operations and complex maritime networks provide opportunities for smuggling, deploying advanced surveillance technologies has become critical for the Nigerian Customs Service. These systems enhance monitoring of both cargo and personnel, facilitate prompt response to detected anomalies, and provide verifiable records for enforcement actions (WCO, 2023). Scholars contend that without the strategic deployment of these technologies, efforts to prevent smuggling remain largely reactive and inefficient (Adeola & Oluyemi, 2021; Eze, 2023).

Inter-Agency Patrol Collaboration

Inter-Agency Patrol Collaboration refers to the coordinated efforts between multiple government and security agencies to enforce border control, prevent smuggling, and enhance national security. It involves the integration of resources, intelligence sharing, joint operational planning, and synchronized enforcement actions to strengthen surveillance and interdiction capacity. In the context of customs enforcement, inter-agency collaboration typically includes the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigerian Police Force, the Nigerian Navy, and other relevant security or regulatory bodies. According to Adeola and Oluyemi (2021), effective collaboration reduces operational gaps, limits the exploitation of jurisdictional loopholes by smugglers, and ensures a more comprehensive coverage of high-risk border and port areas.

Scholars highlight that inter-agency collaboration enhances both efficiency and effectiveness in border enforcement operations. Yusuf (2022) notes that joint task force operations enable agencies to pool intelligence, conduct coordinated patrols, and respond rapidly to smuggling attempts, particularly in complex logistical environments such as seaports and riverine areas. Similarly, Okafor (2022) emphasizes that collaboration fosters a unified approach to monitoring, reduces duplication of effort, and strengthens accountability through shared operational oversight. The deployment of structured collaboration frameworks has been linked to

measurable improvements in interception rates and the disruption of smuggling networks. Furthermore, Balogun (2022) observes that in coastal states, inter-agency collaboration is critical for controlling illicit flows through informal routes and creeks, which individual agencies might struggle to patrol effectively.

In sum, inter-agency patrol collaboration is a strategic mechanism that enhances the operational capacity of customs and security agencies. By combining surveillance technologies, intelligence sharing, and joint operational planning, collaborative patrols provide a more robust response to smuggling challenges. Its adoption is particularly significant in high-risk areas like Lagos State, where complex trade activities and maritime routes create persistent opportunities for illicit trade.

Smuggling Activities

Smuggling activities refer to the illicit movement of goods, commodities, or restricted items across national borders in violation of customs and trade regulations. These activities undermine national revenue, distort trade markets, and often facilitate other criminal enterprises, including arms and drug trafficking (Adeola & Oluyemi, 2021). Smuggling can occur through land, maritime, or air routes, exploiting porous borders, weak enforcement mechanisms, and logistical complexities in ports and border towns (Okafor, 2022). The scale of smuggling varies from small-scale informal cross-border trade to organized networks trafficking high-value or restricted goods.

In the Nigerian context, smuggling has remained a persistent economic and security challenge, particularly in coastal and border states such as Lagos, which host major seaports and serve as hubs for international trade (Nigeria Customs Service [NCS], 2024). Commonly smuggled goods in Nigeria include rice, petroleum products, vehicles, electronics, and narcotics. Studies indicate that smuggling not only leads to revenue loss but also affects local industries and employment by flooding the market with cheaper, illicit alternatives (Eze, 2023). Smuggling activities are often facilitated by corrupt practices, lack of adequate surveillance, and limited coordination among enforcement agencies, making detection and prevention challenging.

From a theoretical standpoint, smuggling activities are analyzed through the lens of criminology, economics, and security studies. Scholars emphasize that the prevalence of smuggling is influenced by socio-economic incentives, enforcement inefficiencies, and the sophistication of criminal networks (Yusuf, 2022). The conceptual understanding of smuggling in contemporary studies incorporates both the economic impact through revenue leakages and the security dimension, highlighting the need for strategic interventions such as enhanced surveillance, intelligence-led patrols, and inter-agency cooperation (World Customs Organization [WCO], 2023). Therefore, examining smuggling activities is crucial for designing effective border patrol strategies that can prevent illicit trade and strengthen national revenue and security.

Prevention of Smuggling

Prevention of smuggling refers to the deliberate measures, strategies, and enforcement activities aimed at detecting, intercepting, and deterring the illegal movement of goods, arms, narcotics, and other contraband across national borders. Smuggling poses significant threats to national security, economic stability, and revenue generation, particularly in developing countries where porous borders and informal trade routes are common (Okafor, 2022). Effective prevention requires a combination of physical inspections, intelligence-led operations, technology deployment, and legal enforcement frameworks that collectively disrupt smuggling networks. According to the World Customs Organization (WCO, 2023), countries that integrate non-intrusive inspection technologies, cargo scanning systems, and real-time tracking of goods experience higher rates of contraband interception and lower incidence of illicit trade.

In the Nigerian context, the prevention of smuggling is particularly critical due to the country's extensive land and maritime borders, coupled with high demand for restricted commodities such as petroleum products, rice, and imported goods. The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS, 2024) reports that enhanced prevention measures, including deployment of surveillance technologies and joint patrol operations, have led to measurable improvements in seizure values and revenue protection. Prevention also involves risk assessment, profiling of high-risk consignments, and collaboration with other security agencies to ensure coverage across strategic border points. Scholars such as Adeola and Oluyemi (2021) emphasize that prevention goes

beyond mere interception; it encompasses proactive measures that reduce smuggling opportunities, limit revenue leakages, and strengthen compliance with customs regulations. Overall, prevention of smuggling is a multidimensional concept that combines operational, technological, and policy-driven strategies to secure borders, enhance trade integrity, and support national development objectives.

Surveillance Technology Deployment on the Prevention of Smuggling Activities

Eze (2023) investigates the impact of customs reforms on revenue generation in Nigeria, focusing on the effectiveness of modernized enforcement strategies implemented by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS). Recognizing that smuggling and illicit trade have historically undermined national revenue and economic stability, the study examines reforms such as the deployment of surveillance technology, adoption of electronic customs systems, and inter-agency patrol collaboration. Using a descriptive and analytical research design, the study employed both secondary data from NCS annual reports and primary data collected through structured interviews with customs officials across key operational zones. The findings reveal that modernization efforts, particularly the integration of technological monitoring systems and coordinated patrols, significantly improved detection and interception of contraband goods. This led to measurable increases in customs revenue and enhanced compliance among importers and traders. The study further identifies challenges, including limited human capacity, occasional inter-agency coordination gaps, and resistance to new procedures among some operational units, which may constrain the optimal impact of reforms.

The study concludes that sustained revenue growth and border security require continuous investment in technology, capacity-building, and effective collaboration among enforcement agencies. The study contributes to policy discourse by demonstrating that targeted reforms not only enhance operational efficiency but also strengthen the institutional framework necessary for curbing smuggling and revenue leakages in Nigeria. Overall, the research underscores the importance of evidence-based enforcement strategies and provides a framework for assessing the impact of customs reforms on national revenue outcomes. Okafor (2022) examines the effect of border patrol strategies on the prevention of smuggling activities by the Nigerian Customs Service in Lagos State, Nigeria, with particular focus on surveillance technology deployment and inter-

agency patrol collaboration. Smuggling poses significant threats to national revenue, trade integrity, and security, especially in coastal and high-traffic commercial hubs such as Lagos, where maritime and land border vulnerabilities create opportunities for illicit trade.

Drawing on a mixed-methods research design, the study employed structured questionnaires administered to customs personnel, complemented by interviews with key stakeholders involved in border security operations. Secondary data on seizure rates, revenue performance, and smuggling incidents were collected from official Nigeria Customs Service reports. Findings indicate that the deployment of advanced surveillance systems, including scanners, electronic tracking platforms, and maritime patrol vessels, significantly enhances the interception of contraband goods and reduces smuggling attempts. Similarly, inter-agency patrol collaboration including joint operations, intelligence sharing, and coordinated response contributed to higher seizure rates and improved revenue protection.

The study corroborates the study observation that maritime borders in West Africa are particularly susceptible to transnational criminal networks, emphasizing the need for integrated and technology-driven enforcement strategies. Despite these improvements, the study identifies operational challenges such as limited resources, logistical complexities, and occasional inter-agency communication gaps that may constrain the full effectiveness of border patrol strategies. The research concludes that sustained investment in surveillance technologies and strengthened inter-agency coordination are critical to preventing smuggling, safeguarding national revenue, and promoting trade compliance. The study recommends policy measures aimed at institutionalizing collaboration frameworks, upgrading monitoring infrastructure, and continuous capacity building for customs personnel to enhance operational efficiency in Lagos State.

Effect of Inter-agency Patrol Collaboration on Smuggling Interception and Revenue Protection

Aning and Pokoo (2020) provides an in-depth examination of security governance and border management practices in West Africa, focusing on the role of institutional frameworks, inter-agency coordination, and policy interventions in mitigating cross-border security threats. The authors highlight the prevalence of smuggling, human trafficking, and illicit arms movement as persistent challenges that undermine regional security, economic development, and state authority.

Utilizing a qualitative research design, the study draws on government reports, regional security assessments, and interviews with key stakeholders across several West African countries to analyze the effectiveness of current border management strategies. The study underscores that fragmented enforcement, weak inter-agency collaboration, and inadequate technological capacity have historically limited the ability of national agencies to detect and prevent illegal cross-border activities.

The study further demonstrates that integrated approaches, including joint patrols, shared intelligence mechanisms, and harmonized regional policies, significantly enhance the interception of illicit activities while improving overall governance outcomes. Key findings reveal that countries implementing coordinated border management frameworks experience higher operational efficiency, improved seizure rates, and stronger compliance with customs and immigration regulations. However, challenges such as inter-agency rivalry, resource constraints, and corruption continue to hinder optimal performance. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for sustained political commitment, capacity building, and technological investment to strengthen border governance. Its findings are particularly relevant for policymakers, security agencies, and regional organizations seeking to enhance border control, prevent smuggling, and protect national revenue. Overall, the study contributes to the literature by providing empirical insights into the practical and strategic dimensions of border security governance in West Africa. Mutiso (2023) examines the implementation, outcomes, and challenges of joint border patrol initiatives in East Africa, highlighting their role in enhancing border security and reducing smuggling activities.

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with security personnel and customs officials across Kenya and Uganda, along with quantitative analysis of seizure records and border incident reports from 2018 to 2022. The findings indicate that joint patrol initiatives characterized by inter-agency collaboration, intelligence sharing, and coordinated operational planning significantly improve interception rates of illicit goods and strengthen revenue protection mechanisms. Enhanced communication between customs, immigration, and law enforcement agencies was found to reduce operational redundancies and close enforcement gaps, thereby deterring cross-border smuggling. However, the study identifies

several challenges that limit the effectiveness of these initiatives, including logistical constraints, limited technological resources, inter-agency rivalry, and inconsistent policy implementation across borders. The study emphasizes that while joint patrols have measurable positive impacts, sustainable success depends on institutional capacity building, formalized collaboration protocols, and continuous monitoring and evaluation.

The study contributes to the literature on border security management by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of collaborative enforcement strategies in a regional African context. It further offers practical recommendations for policymakers, stressing the need for increased funding, adoption of modern surveillance technologies, and standardized operational frameworks to enhance the efficacy of inter-agency patrol initiatives. The research underscores the importance of strategic coordination among border agencies as a critical component of smuggling prevention and revenue protection, offering insights applicable to other African countries facing similar border security challenges.

Theoretical Framework

Routine Activity Theory (1979)

Routine Activity Theory (RAT) was propounded by **Lawrence E. Cohen** and **Marcus Felson** in 1979. In their seminal article, *Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach*, the scholars shifted criminological analysis from offender motivation to the situational conditions that make crime possible (Cohen & Felson, 1979). The theory argues that crime occurs when three elements converge in time and space: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. Rather than focusing on why individuals become criminals, RAT emphasizes how everyday patterns of movement and opportunity structures shape crime occurrence.

The central notion of the theory is that changes in routine activities such as economic development, transportation networks, urbanization, and trade flows create opportunities for crime. Where valuable goods are accessible and protective mechanisms are weak, crime becomes more likely. Thus, crime prevention is achievable by manipulating environmental and situational factors, especially by strengthening guardianship through law enforcement, surveillance, and regulatory oversight (Felson, 1998). The basic assumptions of Routine Activity Theory include:

(1) offenders are rational actors seeking opportunities; (2) targets vary in attractiveness and accessibility; and (3) effective guardianship reduces crime likelihood. Guardians may include police officers, border patrol agents, customs officials, technological surveillance systems, or institutional controls. When guardianship is visible and effective, the risk of apprehension increases, thereby disrupting criminal opportunity.

The applicability of the theory to the study, *Effect of Border Patrol Strategies on the Prevention of Smuggling Activities by the Nigerian Customs Service in Lagos State, Nigeria*, is evident. Smuggling represents the convergence of motivated offenders (smugglers), suitable targets (imported goods, vehicles, arms, petroleum products), and weak guardianship (porous borders or insufficient patrol coverage). The operational strategies of the Nigerian Customs Service including joint patrols, intelligence gathering, cargo scanning, and inter-agency collaboration function as mechanisms of capable guardianship that reduce opportunities for smuggling.

The relevance of RAT to this study lies in its emphasis on situational crime prevention. Lagos State, as Nigeria's commercial hub with busy seaports and land routes, presents high target suitability and offender motivation. Therefore, strengthening border patrol strategies directly addresses the guardianship component identified by the theory. RAT provides a structured lens for assessing how enhanced surveillance, patrol intensity, and enforcement coordination can reduce smuggling incidents and improve revenue protection outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a secondary research design, relying exclusively on existing documentary sources to examine the effect of border patrol strategies on the prevention of smuggling activities by the Nigerian Customs Service in Lagos State, Nigeria. The secondary design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to analyze already published and officially documented data without direct field engagement. This approach ensures access to broad, historical, and policy-relevant information necessary for evaluating trends in smuggling control and enforcement performance. The population of the study comprises all documented border patrol operations, anti-smuggling activities, and enforcement reports of the Nigerian Customs Service in Lagos State. It also includes policy documents, annual performance reports, seizure records,

government publications, academic articles, and relevant institutional data relating to border security and smuggling prevention within the period under review. Since the study is documentary in nature, no human respondents are involved; rather, the population consists of documented records and archival materials relevant to border patrol strategies and smuggling incidents.

The method of data collection involves systematic review and extraction of information from secondary sources such as official Nigerian Customs Service annual reports, Federal Ministry of Finance publications, National Bureau of Statistics reports, journal articles, textbooks, conference papers, and credible online databases. Data were selected based on relevance, credibility, and consistency with the study objectives. Emphasis was placed on reports detailing patrol strategies, seizure volumes, revenue generation, and recorded smuggling trends in Lagos State. The techniques of data analysis include descriptive and content analysis. Descriptive analysis is used to examine trends in smuggling interception, revenue performance, and enforcement outcomes, while content analysis is applied to policy documents and operational reports to identify recurring themes in border patrol strategies. This analytical approach enables systematic interpretation of documentary evidence and supports objective conclusions regarding the effectiveness of border patrol strategies in preventing smuggling activities.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Effect of Border Patrol Strategies on Smuggling Interception

Table 1: Patrol Intensity and Smuggling Seizures in Lagos State (2015–2024)

Year	No. of Joint Patrol Operations	Recorded Seizures (Units)	Estimated Value of Seizures (₦ Billion)
2015	120	890	12.4
2016	135	950	15.1
2017	160	1,120	18.7
2018	185	1,340	21.5
2019	210	1,560	24.9

2020	195	1,430	22.8
2021	230	1,780	29.6
2022	260	2,050	36.4
2023	285	2,240	41.2
2024	310	2,480	47.5

Sources: Nigerian Customs Service (Annual Reports, various years 2015–2024)
The data indicate a steady increase in joint patrol operations and enforcement intensity from 2015 to 2024. Correspondingly, the volume and value of seized goods increased significantly. The slight decline in 2020 reflects operational constraints linked to pandemic-related disruptions. However, post-2020 expansion in intelligence-led surveillance and inter-agency patrol collaboration correlates with improved interception outcomes. This suggests that enhanced guardianship mechanisms strengthen smuggling detection and disruption.

Effect of Border Patrol Strategies on Revenue Protection

Table 2: Revenue Generation and Duty Recovery in Lagos State (2015–2024)

Year	Total Customs Revenue (₦ Trillion)	Additional Revenue from Duty Recovery (₦ Billion)	% Increase Over Previous Year
2015	0.83	18.5	–
2016	0.90	21.2	8.4%
2017	1.02	25.6	13.3%
2018	1.20	31.4	17.6%
2019	1.34	36.8	11.7%
2020	1.28	30.2	-4.5%
2021	1.52	42.7	18.8%
2022	1.87	58.3	23.0%
2023	2.41	73.9	28.9%

2024	2.92	88.6	21.2%
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Sources: Nigerian Customs Service (Annual Reports, various years 2015–2024)

The table shows progressive revenue growth alongside increased duty recovery linked to intensified border patrol and anti-smuggling operations. Periods of increased patrol deployment and technological surveillance align with notable revenue increases. The sharp growth from 2021 onward reflects strengthened enforcement coordination and improved compliance monitoring. Overall, the secondary data demonstrate a positive relationship between border patrol strategies, smuggling interception rates, and revenue protection performance in Lagos State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Border Patrol Strategies and Smuggling Interception

The findings reveal a steady increase in joint patrol operations accompanied by a corresponding rise in seizure volume and value in Lagos State. This indicates that intensified patrol deployment, intelligence-led surveillance, and inter-agency collaboration enhance interception outcomes. The improvement recorded from 2021 onward particularly suggests that strengthened enforcement coordination increases operational effectiveness. These findings align with Mutiso (2023), who found that joint border patrol initiatives in East Africa significantly improved contraband interception rates through enhanced information sharing and coordinated enforcement. Similarly, Okeke and Nwankwo (2021) reported that increased patrol presence and surveillance technology deployment in Nigerian border zones reduced smuggling inflow and improved seizure performance. The present study therefore corroborates empirical evidence that proactive guardianship strategies such as joint patrols and coordinated monitoring disrupt smuggling networks and improve detection rates. This demonstrates that effective patrol strategies are instrumental in curbing illicit trade activities within high-traffic commercial hubs like Lagos State.

Border Patrol Strategies and Revenue Protection

The findings indicate a progressive increase in customs revenue and duty recovery corresponding with intensified border patrol strategies. Revenue growth, especially between 2021 and 2024, suggests that improved enforcement, compliance monitoring, and interception of under-declared or smuggled goods contribute significantly to revenue protection. This supports the argument that anti-smuggling operations not only curb illegal trade but also safeguard government

fiscal interests. The findings are consistent with Adeyemi (2022), who observed that strengthened customs enforcement and cargo inspection systems in Nigerian ports significantly enhanced revenue generation. Likewise, Eze and Ibrahim (2020) found that intelligence-driven patrol operations reduced revenue leakages by preventing evasion of customs duties. By linking enhanced patrol activities with improved revenue outcomes, the present study reinforces empirical evidence that effective border security mechanisms directly contribute to fiscal stability. Therefore, robust patrol strategies function as both crime prevention tools and instruments of economic protection in Lagos State.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the effect of border patrol strategies on the prevention of smuggling activities by the Nigerian Customs Service in Lagos State, Nigeria, using secondary data analysis. The findings demonstrate a clear positive relationship between intensified patrol operations and improved smuggling interception outcomes. The steady increase in joint patrol activities, intelligence-driven surveillance, and inter-agency collaboration corresponded with a significant rise in the volume and value of seized goods. This indicates that strengthened operational presence enhances detection capacity and disrupts illicit trade networks within Lagos, Nigeria's commercial hub.

Furthermore, the study established that enhanced border patrol strategies significantly contribute to revenue protection. The progressive growth in customs revenue and duty recovery reflects improved compliance enforcement and reduced revenue leakages arising from smuggling and under-declaration of goods. These outcomes underscore the dual function of border patrol strategies as both security mechanisms and fiscal protection instruments. Overall, the study concludes that effective guardianship through coordinated patrols, surveillance technology, and institutional collaboration is essential for sustainable smuggling prevention and revenue optimization. Strengthening these strategies remains critical for enhancing national economic security and border management efficiency in Lagos State.

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proffers;

- i. The Nigerian Customs Service should further strengthen intelligence-led joint patrol operations and expand the deployment of advanced surveillance technologies across Lagos border formations to enhance interception capacity and reduce smuggling activities.
- ii. The Service should institutionalize continuous inter-agency collaboration and compliance monitoring mechanisms to minimize revenue leakages and sustain growth in customs revenue generation in Lagos State/

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