

Abstract

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) intends to enhance China's international integration, strikingly by enhancing infrastructure and bolstering trade and investment links among the economies involved. Poor transport infrastructure and border restrictions are significant deterrents to trade expansion, economic growth, and bilateral trade. Using panel structural gravity model estimations, this study investigates the impact of Transportation infrastructure inheritances on bilateral trade across the Belt and Road member countries, particularly in Eastern Africa. The study considers the potential effect of the BRI roads, railways, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure network on the bilateral trade and economies of the Eastern African countries. The empirical analysis offers robust evidence that transport infrastructure promotes trade. The study found that transport infrastructure has a significant and positive effect on trade. These results imply that transport infrastructure exerts a strong effect on trade and growth in Eastern Africa. Policies for increasing access and affordability of transport infrastructure are highly recommended to promote trade and economic growth in the Eastern Africa sub-region.