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**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAPE COAST**

**11<sup>TH</sup> UNIVERSITIES, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

*Conference*

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## Session chairs and conference committee

### for presentations and discussions

We would like to thank our session chairs and conference committee for the interesting collection of conference sessions.

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# Leveraging Architecture Development Methodology

## to Enhance AfCFTA's Success

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### **Abstract**

This research investigates the practical implementation of Architecture Development Methodology (ADM) with the aim of bolstering the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The primary focus is on formulation of a customized architectural enhancement tailored specifically for AfCFTA to foster trade integration and drive economic growth within the Common African Market. The study delves into the intricacies and prerequisites of AfCFTA's trade environment, aligning critical aspects such as business processes, data management, applications, and technology infrastructure. In the preliminary phase, the research unfolds the foundational architecture of AfCFTA and establishes the research's scope. Furthermore, it conducts a thorough examination of AfCFTA's Business Model Canvas, offering insights into its fundamental elements and contextual relevance. Transitioning to the Architecture Vision phase, the research highlights the paramount importance of stakeholder engagement. It identifies key stakeholders and refines an involvement map to facilitate effective collaboration. This phase is informed by both internal and external business drivers, which profoundly influence the architecture's envisioned direction. Finally, the research employs an Archimate model to depict the target architecture. The model is complemented by comprehensive descriptions of its components and the benefits it brings to the fore. In essence, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Architecture Development Methodology can be harnessed to catalyze the prosperity of AfCFTA, enhancing trade integration and fostering economic growth within the Common African Market.

**Keywords:** *AfCFTA, Architecture Development Methodology, Business Model Canvas, Archimate model*

# Theories of Economic Integration in Africa and

## Implications for AfCFTA

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This paper evaluates the economic theories that underpin the major Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa and their implication for the general framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The urge for regional integration has seen more vibrancy in present times intending to build stronger ties among nations for investment and trade flows. This sums up the theoretical motivations for the integration effort that has guided the African Union (AU) so far. Since the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the AU, various RECs have attended to it with various aims, objectives and principles. The economic integration agenda of the AU witnessed an unprecedented wave after the coming into effect of the first phase of the AfCFTA under the auspices of the vision of the 1991 Abuja Treaty for the African Economic Community (AEC). There is much debate in contemporary literature on whether the African integration regime has been successful, or otherwise. However, the literature does not adequately delve into the theoretical underpinnings of the various integration efforts across the continent and their implications for the overall economic agenda of the AU on the wheels of the AfCFTA. Through a method of doctrinal review of available literature from 1961 to 2022, the conclusion of this paper strengthens the views that: First, Africa's integration efforts have lacked a consensus on a single theory; Second, integration must be judged within the metrics of development perceived from an Afrocentric viewpoint; Third, Africa's economic development will be successful under the AfCFTA if a more contemporary application of the principles of integration, rather than an overly broad examination of theories that have no immediate connection are pursued.

**Keywords:** AfCFTA, Africa, Development, Free Trade, Integration

## Implementing AfCFTA:

### Lessons from afro-pessimists and afro-optimists

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#### **Abstract**

Global cooperation has been an acceptable strategy for addressing many of the world's challenges. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement which entered into force on 30 May 2019 was designed in similar light for Africa's development. Its objectives among others are to create a single market for goods, and services, and deepen the economic integration of the African continent by the vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa as enshrined in the Agenda 2063. However, these benefits may not be realized unless concerted and sustained efforts are garnered by member states to ensure the effective implementation of the AfCFTA. These efforts often elude most developing countries, and it is against this backdrop that this study attempts to investigate whether the contrasting perspectives of the afro-pessimists and afro-optimist could be of relevance to AfCFTA implementation. Using document analysis, the study synthesized both empirical and theoretical literature and found that the Afro-pessimists are very critical and paint a gloomy picture of Africa. Whereas the Afro-optimists, are more positive looking with the claim that Africa is mistreated and its achievements are inordinately ignored. Significantly, both perspectives deepen understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Africa's development, providing a useful context for either the failure or success of the AfCFTA's implementation. The key lesson the study draws is for Africans to maximize their strengths as much as possible and minimize their weaknesses. This will actualize the "Africa rising" phrase and lead to the majority of Africans rising with Africa.

**Keywords:** *Afro-optimism, Afro-pessimism, African Continental Free Trade Area, Implementing AfCFTA, Africa.*



# Sustained advertising for SMEs and the food industry

## with inclusive Augmented Reality (AR) user experiences

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the potential of using Augmented Reality (AR) technology to enhance sustained advertising efforts for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food industry while promoting an inclusive user experience. The traditional advertising model for most companies and start-ups includes outsourcing the job of brand promotion to an external design company. While this model has worked well to some extent, whereby the products are made known to the public, it has also been mechanical to a large extent. A brand guideline ensures, in most cases, a consistent promotional tone and communication. However, most of the advertisements considered up to now need more engagement from the audience. The traditional model of product promotion is also challenging in terms of cost. With the evolution of the Web, interactivity is enhanced, and buyers can make decisions based on reviews left by previous consumers. By integrating AR into advertising campaigns, SMEs can create immersive and interactive experiences through stories that engage diverse audiences, drive brand awareness, and foster customer loyalty at a much affordable price. This paper will discuss the significance of sustained advertising for SMEs, highlight the benefits of incorporating AR technology, and provide practical strategies for creating inclusive AR user experiences in the food industry context. The paper provides an overview of how small businesses and SMEs can create engaging customer stories for product promotion at no outsourcing cost. AR experiences are developed, demonstrated and analysed in terms of sustainability. This new product promotion strategy promotes an affordable customer-driven product advertisement with forecasting possibilities whereby the consumers provide inspirational and immersive insights into the product in the form of stories accessible across new media to a screen-hooked generation.

**Keywords:** *Augmented Reality, Food Industry, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Sustained Advertising*

# AfCFTA: Reviewing Likely Impacts and Challenges of Implementing and Trade Facilitation Measures through Structured Gravity Estimation

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## **Abstract**

African Union member states decided to establish “the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) during the 18th meeting of 2012 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The AfCFTA aims at facilitating intra-African trade and improving Africa’s trading position in the global market. Concerning the potential impact, a range of studies considered here predict that the real income impact of the AfCFTA can reach up to 7 percent from the tariff, nontariff, and trade facilitation in a dynamic setting. While the range of projected intra-trade impact is about a 33 to 82 percent increase, intra-agri-food trade is expected to grow by 22 percent, and tariff revenue loss is 0.03 percent to 0.22 percent of the GDP or up to 9 percent of the total revenue. The review, in general, highlight the potential impacts of policy intervention at hand are heterogeneous across regions, countries, and sectors. First, tariff reduction of the AfCFTA alone can have positive impacts. However, the gains from trade facilitation and the reduction in nontariff barriers are projected to induce greater gains. Second, studies that used scenarios of total tariff reduction, trade in goods, and static models did not consider the full potential gain of the agreement. Including trade in services in a dynamic model and taking structural non-tariff barriers needs to be addressed to tap the benefits. Third, the agreement’s projected impacts are sensitive to various factors. The overwhelming tariffs (100 percent) and nontariff reductions need more attention, while nontariff trade measures are increasing globally, and regionalism is coupled with trade wars between developed countries. Member countries overlapping in different Regional Economic Communities, informal trade, public awareness of the agreement, challenges related to a person’s free mobility and capital, reconciliation of domestic policies, and related adjustment costs and inequality impacts can affect the effects predicted by current models compared to the actual effects of the outcomes of the AfCFTA over time. In a quantitative estimation of the trade impacts of trade delays and red tapes, our research utilizes a panel structural gravity model to estimate the trade elasticities of various trade facilitation measures, such as time to export/import, logistics performance index, and enabling trade index. We then calculate the monetary equivalents, known as the Ad valorem tariff equivalents, using robust analysis techniques and diverse data

sources. Our findings are consistent with prior studies, showing strong negative impacts of time to trade and positive and significant impacts of logistics performance and the trade enabling index. Developing countries with higher custom delays benefit more from improvements in trade facilitation measures than developed countries. Additionally, we found that a one-day customs delay has a 0.9 percent tariff equivalent, whereas improvements in logistics, infrastructure, and trade enabling environment to have much higher tariff equivalents, around 10 percent from different estimations. The agriculture, food, and some manufacturing sectors, which are the major import items of Africa, benefit the most from trade facilitation implementation whereas energy and mining-related products, which are the major export components of Africa, benefit the least. These results highlight the importance of investing in trade facilitation specifically in infrastructure development, logistics and custom efficiency to improve trade while it demands that Africa should seek stronger bargaining power for trade facilitation financing from developed countries and focus on industrializing and diversifying its economy. Thus, Africa needs to strengthen its bargaining power for trade facilitation financing as non-discriminatory trade facilitations will aggravate its import dependence by increasing import from outside Africa by higher than its intra-trade as Kiel Institute studies also confirmed.

***Keywords:*** AfCFTA, Trade Facilitation, Gravity model, Tariff Ad valorem equivalents

# Digitization of Businesses among SMEs

## in Some Selected Areas in Ghana

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to assess the operationalisation of digital businesses among SMEs in commercial areas of the Central Region. The specific objectives were to analyse the level of knowledge and use of digital platforms by SMEs. The study reviewed literature regarding the available digital platforms on Ghana. Also, data was gathered from 400 SMEs in Cape Coast, Mankessim, Assin Fosu, Agona Swedru and Kasoa on their level of knowledge and the use of these available digital platforms. Self-administered questionnaires were shared and a purposive sampling technique was employed. Descriptive statistics in the SPSS was used to test for the objectives of the study. Results indicated that managers of SMEs in the study areas have more knowledge and utilize Mobile Money more than any of the country's digital platforms. It is recommended that digital trading platform providers should enhance their advertising and focus on making their platforms easy to use for the average consumer.

**Keywords:** *Digitalisation, SMEs, Financial Performance, Central Region*

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### **Abstract**

Sustainability of technology start-ups can be achieved on the basis of how well they monitor and evaluate their business activities and outcomes. This ideology is supported by the agency theory and theory of change that start-ups can achieve business objectives when business operations and results are monitored and evaluated in a coherent manner. In view of that the study examines the effect monitoring, and evaluation practices on the Growth of tech start-ups in Africa. The study adopted the quantitative approach, and explanatory research design. Owner-managers of the tech-start-ups were the respondents. For this study, the data processing software were SPSS and SmartPLS. The analytical technique was the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). This study will have these contributions. In the first place, the outcomes from this study will enrich the literature on monitoring, evaluation, and growth of tech start-ups. Specifically, it will serve as solid empirical basis for other studies to be built upon. In addition, its contribution to theory cannot be overemphasised. In terms of policy, the study can be equally beneficial to governments that invest heavily in this tech start-ups. In relation to practice, this study will make a great contribution to the formulation and implementation of practices that will promote the success of tech start-ups. Also, the findings of the study will shape the monitoring, and evaluation profession in extending its tentacles into the high-tech world.

**Keywords:** *Monitoring, Evaluation, Growth*

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### **Abstract**

Major Startup cities in Germany are already adapting digital ecosystem maps, making it easier for investors and stakeholders to traverse and have information on what goes on within the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Bennett, 2018). While Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa is growing steadily, especially in the case of Rwanda, the entrepreneurial ecosystem keeps becoming less transparent. The issue of lack of transparency appears to be a factor that breeds corruption in the long run, while discouraging foreign direct investments (Razalison, 2019). This research offers a deep dive into the issue of transparency within the Sub-Saharan African entrepreneurial ecosystem (using Rwanda as a case study), how this issue of transparency affects the ecosystem in Rwanda and its influence on German investors or entrepreneurs' decision to establish and invest in Africa, and finally, how transparency can be improved using a digital ecosystem map. Included in this research was a survey conducted among 61 Rwandan entrepreneurs based in Rwanda, an in-depth interview with 10 ecosystem stakeholders in Rwanda, and 3 German Startups based in Germany. To understand the main concepts introduced in this paper, a review of published papers by other researchers was carried out and analysed. The end goal of this research was to explore the possibility of improving transparency in the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Rwanda using a digital ecosystem map, and the features such a map should have; a concept that can be replicated in other African countries.

**Keywords:** *Digital ecosystem, Sub-Saharan African, entrepreneurial ecosystem*

# A qualitative investigation of doctoral students

## With mobile devices experience

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### **Abstract**

A qualitative case study approach was adopted to examine the availability of online information sources and how personal preference affect doctoral students' information search. Twenty-four doctoral students from the University of Cape Coast were interviewed. The findings showed that the participants downloaded the information they needed from sources on the Internet, including online journals, electronic books, online dissertations and theses and other e-resources. It was also revealed that the doctoral students' personal preference for certain online information sources affect their study-related information search. Also, the knowledge level, trust and experience in using particular online information sources affect doctoral students' personal preference. The credibility and non-restrictiveness of the online information sources motivates students from using a particular online information source. It is recommended that access to online information sources should be consolidated to one platform in order to enhance ease access of information.

**Keywords:** *Online information sources, personal preference, study-related information, availability, doctoral students*

## Solar Off-Grid Systems for Productive

### Use in remote areas of Uganda

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#### **Abstract**

This study investigated how off-grid solar systems could be designed to support in different areas of productive use, such as education, businesses and agro-processing, and health centres, for communities in Lake Victoria Islands of Uganda. It was conducted by a team from Uganda Christian University (UCU) and Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences (HNU) with Koome Island chosen for the study purpose among the four major Islands in the Lake Victoria. A mixed method study was used with research combining both quantitative and qualitative empirical approach using multi-stage sampling technique. Participants in quantitative study were 537 mostly household heads, each representing a household; 257 males and 280 females. Most of the respondents were also running small scale businesses. Structured questionnaires were administered with one-on-one interview with respondents. Two Focus Group Discussions were held with opinion leaders and fifteen Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted with school leaders and teachers from eight schools within the Island. Findings from the study shows that there is very high demand for a reliable energy source, almost all (98%) of the participants were willing to uptake off-grid solar power which they considered would provide reliable and affordable energy source. Important stakeholders of the island communities were impressed about the prospect of having a solar off-grid system to serve the Islands. They believe more economic activities would be spurred in the Islands if there is a more regular source of energy. The study provides a constructive insight how to model and plan the capacity of a solar off-grid system by regarding the willingness to pay of future consumers. Further based on the survey conducted a ranking of business models used for productive use was developed. Particularly opportunities for women entrepreneurship could be disclosed by this research approach. The achieved ranking of business models shows the attractiveness of possible entrepreneurship for the private sector from a supply and demand perspective and is an important base how future electricity demand can be expected in similar rural communities. Thus, this approach delivers a sound



base for a realistic planning of the power of solar off-grid systems. Finally, the results of the paper provide valuable insights for decision makers in governments, non-governmental organizations and international development organizations.

**Keywords:** *Decentralized Electrification, Solar Off-Grid Systems, Entrepreneurship, Women entrepreneurship, Productive Use, Willingness to pay*

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### **Abstract**

COVID-19 has been a critical turning point for businesses worldwide, compelling them to adopt digital technologies to sustain economic activity. However, with limited resources such as budget constraints, transforming business strategies to integrate digital technologies is tedious. As the global market continues to evolve into a dynamic digitalised landscape, adopting digital transformation has become essential for businesses, especially start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to remain competitive. Consequently, this paper presents a roadmap for start-ups and SMEs to guide them in looking for support in digital technologies to leverage their businesses. The methodology includes a review of the industry's best practices and case studies based on successful implementation while fostering a customer-centric approach. Visits to trade fairs and interviews of small business owners were conducted (1) to understand the challenges faced by SMEs and (2) to identify their needs in using digital technologies. The result shows that one of the main challenges SMEs face is that, apart from the lack of proper infrastructure, they lack confidence in adopting technology in their business. They require knowledge of digital technologies to help them properly define their requirements and use digital platforms. A framework mapped on the Hierarchy of effects model is proposed to assist SMEs embarking on digital transformation systematically to learn, adapt, evolve and sustain their businesses, based on their needs, at their pace. The contribution of this research relates to the strategic roadmap, which provides step-by-step guidelines to support those SMEs which could be part of the economic growth of their respective countries.

**Keywords:** *Digital Transformation, digital technologies, global market, customer-centric approach*

# A critical analysis of Rwanda's Digital skills and

## Entrepreneurship training toward solving youth unemployment

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**Abstract:**

This study critically examines the role of digital skills and entrepreneurship training in addressing the persistent issue of youth unemployment in Rwanda. The paper primarily anchors on the Human Capital Theory and Entrepreneurship Theory to provide a solid theoretical framework, tying together education, skill development, and entrepreneurial activity as vital drivers of productivity, job creation, and economic development. By utilizing a qualitative methods approach that combines qualitative stakeholder interviews, this research evaluates the effectiveness of the various policies and programs aimed at fostering digital and entrepreneurship skills to young people in Rwanda, to promote employment. The research unveils that these programmes hold significant potential in equipping the Rwandan youth with relevant skills and nurturing an innovative and entrepreneurial culture. However, it also highlights key areas requiring attention: the lack of robust follow-up mechanisms and the need for continued support post-training. It advocates for policymakers and programme implementers to prioritize these aspects to maximize their initiatives' impact. The implications of this study extend beyond Rwanda's borders as countries worldwide grapple with similar challenges. Therefore, the insights gleaned from Rwanda's approach could guide other nations in leveraging digital skills and entrepreneurship training to combat youth unemployment in the digital age. It concludes by recommending future research directions, including maintaining program relevance in the ever-evolving digital landscape and instituting more effective support mechanisms for venture sustainability.

**Keywords:** *Digital Skills, Youth Unemployment; Rwanda; Entrepreneurship Training; Innovation; Policymaking; Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration*

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**Abstract**

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of seventeen global objectives designed to promote economic, social, and ecological development in all regions of the globe. While the academic discussion on the contribution of businesses to the Sustainable Development Goals has recently acquired momentum, the role of business-to-business (B2B) partnerships in achieving the SDGs remains largely unexplored, particularly with regard to North-South relationships. By investigating sales partnerships between German manufacturers and their distributors in African markets, we aim at advancing research on the crucial role of B2B partnerships for reaching the SDGs. On the basis of a qualitative analysis of 28 semi-structured interviews with managers of German and African enterprises, we demonstrate that long-term partnerships and job creation, technology transfer, training, and high standards are significant contributions of companies to the attainment of the SDGs. While we find that B2B partnerships strongly address SDGs 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) as well as 17 (partnership for the goals), we also discuss strategies for expanding the firms' engagement for achieving the SDGs.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Development Goals, Business-to-Business, business-to-business*

# Total Quality Management Practices and Sustainable

## Performance of Food Processing Firms in Ghana

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### **Abstract**

Globally, the food processing industry is one of the most profitable industries that generate large amounts of income for several countries. In Ghana, the sector dominates about 60% of the agricultural sector and contributes about 11% to gross domestic product (GDP). The sector is also the most productive in terms of labour productivity and wages patterns. Safe food is essential to human health and well-being, and it is one of the most critical guarantors of good health. Therefore, food processing firms adopt various strategies to enhance their performance, and quality management is among the major strategies that make them attractive, competitive, and sustainable. Robust quality management practices enable such organisations to enhance their reputation, increase profitability, improve customer satisfaction, and be compliant to state and industrial regulatory requirements. Total quality management (TQM), has been found by scholars and industry players as a holistic quality management concept that seeks to improve quality outcomes in all functional areas of a business. Some firms within the food processing sector have successfully implemented TQM practices over the years. Even though there are numerous TQM practices, results from a preliminary study with 50 food processing firms, expert opinions, and a literature review highlighted: management leadership, training, employee relations, quality data and reporting, supplier quality management, product/service design, and process management, as the commonly implemented TQM practices by the food processing firm within the Ghanaian context. However, how this quality management approach affects their performance is yet to be fully discovered due to the overreliance on the traditional approach of measuring performance. This, therefore, calls for a shift from this traditional approach which is cost-efficiency oriented and solely measured in financial terms, to a sustainable approach which evaluates performance in terms of economic, social, and environmental. Quality is a strategic resource that is usually embedded in a firm's employees, strategies, and operational procedures. Therefore, dwelling on the resource base theory, this research seeks to explain how firms within the food processing supply chain can leverage TQM practices to enhance their sustainable performance. Using structured and self-administered questionnaires, data would be collected from 158 firms within the food

processing supply chain in Ghana that have implemented the TQM practices, and the structural equation modelling data analytic technique will be employed to analyze the data. Overall, the findings of this study offer theoretical and managerial implications for policy, the business, and the research community. Theoretically, the study offers new directions on how various quality management practices may influence different types of sustainability dimensions. Further, it provides a justification for the design of performance management systems based on the holistic implementation of total quality management among food processing supply chains. The study further contributes to achieving sustainable development goals (SDG) number 3- good health and wellbeing, and 12- responsible consumption and production.

***Keywords:*** *TQM practices, gross domestic product, food processing industry*

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the role that Total Quality Management (TQM) plays in ensuring operational efficiency via supplier quality in public health sector in the Upper East Region. Specifically, the study examined the effect of TQM on supplier quality; effect of TQM on operational efficiency; effect of supplier quality on operational efficiency and finally assessed the mediating role that supplier quality plays in the relationship between TQM and operational efficiency within these health sectors in the Upper East region. Structured questionnaire utilized to solicit for primary data from the study's respondents. The selection of 174 sampled respondents from the total population of 352 public health facilities were done using a simple random sampling procedure. Also, version 24 of the IBM SPSS software and the SMART PLS-SEM model were utilised to process the data. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were analysed with the help of descriptive tools such as means and standard deviation, while inferential statistical tools were employed in testing the cause and effect hypothesised relationships between the variables. The findings revealed that total quality management had a positive significant effect on supplier quality. Likewise, the objective two showed that total quality management have a positive statistically significant effect on operational performance. The third objective showed that supplier quality have a positive statistically significant effect on operational efficiency, and the fourth research objectives revealed a positive statistically significant mediating effect of supplier quality in the relationship between total quality management and operational efficiency. The study recommended that, management of health facilities within the Upper East region should emphasize on putting measures in place in order to ensure the improvement of their TQM practices to help set standard that will ensure that suppliers goods and services conforms to quality standard.

**Keywords:** *Total Quality Management, supplier quality, operational efficiency*

# Saving Honest Entrepreneurs through the Ghana

## Second Chance Policy in Ghana

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### **Abstract**

This paper analyses the existing legal frameworks on insolvency in Ghana and how they sufficiently provide to save honest entrepreneurs during financial reforms. Goal nine of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) partly seeks to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by 2030, significantly raise the industry's share of employment and gross domestic product (GDP), in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries. This in essence requires sustainable policy interventions that keep enterprises surviving in any form of economic, financial or ecological restructuring to help realise the goal nine objective. In any modern economy, financial sector reforms are welcomed as long as they meet standards and engender financial sector performance. Financial sector reforms, thus, are a welcomed mechanism to foster financial sector efficiency for sustainable growth. During the period of decision-making in financial sector reforms, it is expected that some business concerns would have their lifespan terminated. Notwithstanding, recent episodes of financial deregulation have revealed unintended consequences of demobilising the sector by affecting innocent entrepreneurs in such events. In the recent banking sector reforms beginning in 2016 in Ghana, over 400 financial institutions were liquidated without any effort to disaggregate the so-called fraudulent entrepreneurs from honest enterprises. In the aftermath of the financial sector reforms, the Corporate Restructuring and Insolvency Act, 2020 (Act 1015) has been passed. The aim of this paper is to address the issue of whether or not the existing legal framework benchmarked against the CAMEL framework absolves honest entrepreneurs in such a period as against fraudulent entrepreneurs. The paper adopted the doctrinal legal research approach using distinct research tools including data from primary sources, statutes, journal articles, online resources and other obligatory tools. It finds that recent financial sector reforms did not segregate the fraudulent entrepreneur from honest entrepreneurs to make room for the CAMEL to save the latter. It concludes on how a second chance policy can be developed along with existing statutes to settle and save honest businesses in periods of economic volatility.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship, CAMEL, Insolvency, Financial sector reforms, Second Chance Policy*



# Quintuple helix Framework and International Entrepreneurship in the Circular Economy

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## **Abstract**

This study is a conceptual study that puts international entrepreneurship in emerging economies, specifically Ghana into focus. It looks at how ultimately international entrepreneurship could be done within the circular economy paradigm and the pivotal role of strategic alliances by applying the quintuple helix framework which involves the collaboration of academics, industry, government, civil society, and the natural environment. Considering the effects of climate change and the urgent actions needed to have it checked, this study is crucial for promoting sustainable innovation especially for small businesses who engage in international entrepreneurship in the circular economy; which emphasizes the reduction of waste and conscientious use of resources in mind. Fundamentally, this study seeks to evaluate how strategic alliances between the actors in the quintuple helix framework significantly influence international entrepreneurship in Ghana with the circular economy in focus. A mixed method, using both qualitative and quantitative data would be used in this study. The findings and recommendations of this study relating to the strategic alliances to inculcate or promote for results and impact is essentially crucial to all stakeholders in the quintuple helix framework in the international entrepreneurship – circular economy space. Also, for policymakers, applicable to the 55 African economies working towards Africa's Agenda 2063, international organizations and stakeholders, the findings of the study would sharpen the formulation and implementation of policies, programmes and projects relating to international entrepreneurship and the circular economy.

**Keywords:** *International Entrepreneurship, Circular Economy, Quintuple Helix Framework, Strategic Alliances, Emerging Economies, Small Business Sustainability*

# Youth Involvement in Rice Production:

## A Panacea for Youth Restiveness in Anambra State, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

There is a great concern about youth restiveness due to growing unemployment in Nigeria, whereas agriculture is a huge business space with the potential for youth participation and employment. The study sought to ascertain the level of youths' involvement in rice production activities in Anambra State, Nigeria. A total of 80 respondents from Awka North and Ayamelum LGAs were purposively selected because of the preponderance of rice production in the area. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule and were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and regression. The study revealed that youths were into the planting of rice seedlings ( $\bar{x}$  =1.99), buying and selling of seedlings ( $\bar{x}$ =1.95), harvesting ( $\bar{x}$ =1.91), and fertilizer application ( $\bar{x}$ =1.90). Sex ( $t$ = -2.28) and level of education ( $t$ = -2.18) significantly influenced youths' involvement in rice production. The youths were constrained mainly by the high cost of input ( $\bar{x}$ =2.97), and lack of capital to scale up production ( $\bar{x}$ =2.93). Comprehensive training on rice production ( $\bar{x}$ =2.99), and enforcement of practical agriculture curriculum in secondary schools ( $\bar{x}$ =2.99) were identified as possible strategies for improving youths' involvement in rice production. The study concluded that youths were into rice production though influenced by lack of formal education and being female. The government should make rice production attractive to the youth by eliminating the constraining factors associated with its production to attract the more educated youth population.

**Keywords:** *Youth participation, Youth restiveness, Rice production, Youth in rice production in Nigeria*

# Empowering Young Artists:

## From Passion to Entrepreneurship

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to provide insights into the journey of empowering young artists, helping them transition from pursuing their artistic passions to becoming successful entrepreneurs. It highlights personal experiences, discusses the role of personal branding and intends to uncover the strategies and mindsets required for this transformation. This study delves into the challenges and opportunities emerging artists face on their journey towards entrepreneurship. The presentation's goal is to equip young artists with the knowledge and skills necessary not only to create art but also to manage their artistic enterprises, motivating and encouraging creative entrepreneurs of our time. The expression of human creativity manifests in diverse ways, including emotions and attitudes. Art plays a significant role in this context. Art's impact on individuals is supported by the pursuit of sharing their creativity with the world, which can evolve into entrepreneurship, offering great opportunities. However, this path, although it may seem easy, comes with substantial challenges, such as the lack of durable materials, financial needs, and support, intentional practice, and dedication. Despite these challenges, art significantly contributes to economic growth, culture, and individual well-being. Therefore, the success of artists does not only benefit them but also society as a whole. I am Christabel Ama Asmah, an undergraduate student at the University of Cape Coast, studying Bachelor of Fine Art Education in painting and sculpture. I have a deep passion for an art that shapes my future as a female artist. My goal is to transform my artistic skills into a successful entrepreneurial venture, specializing in portrait pencil artworks, paintings and sculptural artifacts. I aspire not only to create art but also to extend my creativity to train and empower other young individuals, particularly in the teaching field.

In recognition of my talent and dedication, I received the prestigious Discovery Artist of the year 2023 award, leading to a memorable meeting with the President of the Republic of Ghana, his Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo Addo, during the University OF Cape Coast's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. I look forward to more achievements. My primary objective is to showcase art to the world through contemporary sculpture pieces, paintings, and captivating works that reflect my experiences, thoughts,

and insights on current issues while encouraging young artists to make their passion profitable in entrepreneurship. By posing thought-provoking questions to viewers, I aim to stimulate their contemplation and engagement. Driven by a profound appreciation for beauty and aesthetics, my artworks not only serve as a source of income but also possess therapeutic quality, contributing to the healing process of individuals. Creating art is an inherent part of my identity, bringing me fulfilment. Despite encountering both successes and failures on my artistic journey, I draw inspiration from resilient female artists who have overcome challenges, motivating me to aim higher and create value for myself while positively influencing others. Seizing the opportunity to promote my initiative, I encourage fellow artists to embrace innovation and nurture their creativity in their respective eras. My ultimate aspiration is to become a role model for young people, assisting them in developing businesses that enhance their lives and contribute to the nation as a whole. Through my passion, I seek to empower and inspire a new generation of artists, fostering artistic expression and entrepreneurship.

***Keywords:*** *Entrepreneurship, artists, creativity, personal branding*

# The contribution of Entrepreneurial Universities and Uni-industry

## Collaboration in Mauritius towards the achievement of SDGs

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to explore the role of entrepreneurial universities and uni-industry collaboration in Mauritius towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By examining the existing literature on this subject, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection of entrepreneurship, higher education, and sustainable development in the African context. The methodology employed in this research involved a comprehensive review of academic articles, reports, and case studies related to entrepreneurial universities and uni-industry collaboration in Mauritius. The analysis focused on identifying key themes, best practices, challenges, and opportunities associated with these collaborations and their impact on the pursuit of SDGs. The results of the study reveal that entrepreneurial universities in Mauritius play a crucial role in fostering innovation, knowledge transfer, and entrepreneurship among students, faculty, and industry partners (Roopchund, 2020). The uni-industry collaboration acts as a catalyst for economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development in the country (Sjöo, and Hellström, 2019). The findings also highlight the significance of aligning educational programmes with the needs of the industry and society to address the challenges outlined in the SDGs. Theoretical understandings stand to evolve regarding the transformational capacity of entrepreneurial universities and cross-sector collaboration in Mauritius. By highlighting integrating entrepreneurship education, research and sustainable development priorities (Boldureanu, 2020), this research adds to theories connecting higher learning, new venture creation and enduring progress. A focus on balanced, long-term outcomes underscores the need for multi-stakeholder alignment shaping entrepreneurial ecosystems and strategic institutional positioning benefitting both business and society. Advancing such integrated, responsibly oriented models holds implications for re-examining relationships vitalizing local innovation ecosystems and economies. From a practical and managerial perspective, the findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, university administrators, and industry leaders in Mauritius. The results underscore the need for fostering an enabling environment that encourages collaboration, knowledge exchange, and resource sharing between universities and

industries. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of incorporating sustainable development principles into curriculum design, promoting entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, and creating platforms for experiential learning and entrepreneurship support. This paper will shed light on the significant role played by entrepreneurial universities and uni-industry collaboration in Mauritius towards the achievement of SDGs. The findings will further contribute to the existing literature, offer theoretical insights, and provide practical implications for fostering sustainable development through collaborative initiatives between universities and industries.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurial universities, Uni-industry collaboration Sustainable Development Goals*

# Realizing the Entrepreneurial Spirit in Universities of Applied Sciences in Ethiopia through Reskilling of Academic Staff

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## **Abstract**

In 2019 the Ethiopian Ministry of Education published the National Education and Training Road Map. One of the recommendations of this report was the differentiation of Higher Education Sector in Ethiopia in view of educating graduates 'fit for employment'. Accordingly, a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) was established to elaborate a possible differentiation in the tertiary education system. The HLEG recommended the differentiation of Higher Education system in to. Research University, Comprehensive University and University of Applied Sciences (UAS). Subsequently, this led to the designation of 15 Comprehensive Universities into UASs. Considerable changes have followed in terms of curriculum, composition and qualification of academic and administrative staff, students' admission, instructional material, research focus, community engagement, university-industry linkage in general etc. in order to meet the needs of the UASs' regional industry counterparts. In general, academic staff of UASs are expected to teach subjects in the context of industries, be able to communicate with companies to open doors for internship of the students, conduct applied research projects to solve companies' problems and so on by meeting the UAS general objective *to educate academically trained professionals - ready for employment*. This requires reskilling of the academic staff of UAS that they will understand companies' problems and are able to respond on companies' problems that in collaboration with industries/SMEs those problems can be solved. This implicates that faculty members have to learn the 'language of companies/entrepreneurs' such as entrepreneurial thinking that they are enabled to develop their instructional material that students will be encouraged to develop their entrepreneurial mind-set. Accordingly, academic staff of UASs have to acquire entrepreneurial competencies, skills and understanding in managing input factors to produce the requested outputs. The research question is "how to educate the academic staff to develop core entrepreneurial competencies, attitude and skills needed for lecturing at UAS?" This research is built on both, qualitative and quantitative data from teachers,

leaders at universities, the Ministry of Education and Ethiopian industries/SMEs that has been collected during the Ethiopian National Education and Training Road Map survey as well as during the elaboration of the Differentiation of the Ethiopian Higher Education Sector. The data available from the 15 Universities of Applied Sciences will be visualized that assumptions can be drawn for a further discussion in a Focus Group. The paper will be structured into a general literature overview of the competences understood as entrepreneurial competences. Followed by the description of the survey that led to the findings. A brief analysis of the findings guides to the elaboration of an approach suggested to Ethiopian UASs on how to reskill the lecturers' qualification that they will gain the entrepreneurial mind-set, attitudes and skills. The conclusion will design the way forward for UAS lecturers as competent partners for the regional companies.

**Keywords:** *University-Industry-Linkage, entrepreneurial mind-set, entrepreneurial competences, differentiation of the higher education sector*



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### **Abstract**

Over the past years, sustainability has been discussed in literature and practices. In response to the increasing stakeholder concerns on sustainability, firms have been under scrutiny to operate under the sustainable mechanism in their quest to satisfy diverse customer needs. The hospitality industry in Ghana is recognised as one of the highest sectors with excessive consumption of resources in the tourism industry. The hotel supply chain in Ghana is a vital component of the hospitality industry and plays a significant role in the country's economy. The hospitality industry contributes to a thriving and sustainable economy, from procurement and sourcing to local economic impact, employment generation, and boosting agriculture and manufacturing. Overexploitation of natural resources, the destruction of biological diversity, climate change, and the recycling difficulties of hotels have caught the attention of stakeholders and external organisations, particularly those working toward more sustainable practices. One major lever of sustainability, as identified in the literature, is the procurement of goods, works and services. The global pursuit for sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) has put hotels under scrutiny by a wide range of industry stakeholders aware of the sectors' continuous impact on carbon footprints, climate change, resources and energy use to engage in sustainable procurement. Through the lens of stakeholder and institutional theory, the institutional environment of business organisations may consist of institutions that manifest their influences on the business organisation at the territorial levels of different kinds and or domains. The influence exhibited by the institutional environment is widely known as Institutional Isomorphic Pressure. They are “pressures against business organisations to push them to adopt environmental, social and economic practices that drive sustainability within the focal organisation and their supply chain”. Organisational culture plays a vital role in shaping the behaviour and practices of firms, including their approach to sustainability. In the context of sustainable procurement implementation in the hotel supply chain in Ghana, organisational culture becomes a powerful driver for change. Hence, the study's main aim is the interplay of organisational culture in the relationship between isomorphic pressures and sustainable procurement implementation among star-rated Hotels in Ghana. Primary data will be collected through a structured questionnaire from 210 star-rated Ghana hotels.

Partial least square structural equation modelling will be used in the data analysis because of the method's adaptability to data requirements and measurement specifications and its capability to estimate complex models. Theoretically, the study fills this gap by exploring the influence of isomorphic pressures on sustainable procurement implementation in the Hospitality industry in Ghana, with an interplay of the organisational culture of star-rated firms in the industry. Further, implementing sustainable procurement in the procurement process among star-rated Hotels brings to bear the achievement and support of the sustainable development goal (SDG 12) target 7. The study presupposes a full mediation of organisational culture in the relationship between isomorphic pressures and sustainable procurement implementation among star-rated hotels in Ghana.

**Keywords:** *Institutional Pressure, Organisational Culture, Procurement Implementation, Sustainability*

## Exploring Occupational Gifting for Entrepreneurial

## Development among the Fantse of Ghana

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### **Abstract**

Though filial piety enjoins the youth to care for their aged parents, many parents are becoming apprehensive about the potential absence of such care because of youth unemployment in Ghana. Also, entrepreneurs in the informal sector of Ghana's economy cite capital as their primary constraint on establishing or expanding business. Because of low institutional support for obtaining credit facilities from the formal banking sector for new business ventures, many entrepreneurs have to rely on family and friends for start-up capital. This paper, developed from reports on ethnographic research projects in parts of the Central Region of Ghana on the social and economic systems, uses the model of capital accumulation developed by Das, Mourmouras and Rangazas' (2018), to argue that occupational gifting creates avenues for young graduates to raise capital to revamp existing small-scale family business ventures to provide them with employment and facilitate effective care of the aged. Through occupational gifting, aging parents 'gift' their thriving businesses and transfer their experiences garnered over their active years to their younger relatives. The paper concludes that occupational gifting helps to guarantee a stable means of income and financial security for both young graduates and the aged. It recommends that occupational gifting should be encouraged, and capital made available to the youth so that the youth can use modern business strategies to develop such enterprises.

**Keywords:** *Ageing, entrepreneurship, filiation, filial piety, Ghana, occupational gifting, informal sector*

# Managing risk in the sale of vegetables among SMEs:

## Perspectives of Ghanaian women

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### **Abstract**

This study aims at assessing vegetables handling processes and their cascading effects on business sustainability among market women in the Takoradi Metropolis. Whilst some scholarly works have quantitatively been done in this area of study, little is done using qualitative approach. Therefore, this study contributes significantly to the literature in qualitative studies. The study employs an exploratory case study approach involving 22 participants in Takoradi metropolis. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting respondents who were interviewed through face-to-face and focus group discussions with a semi-structured interview guide. Atlas ti software was used to analyze the data. The processes of handling the vegetables include: spreading the wares on trays, tables, shelves, keeping the ware in crates, cartons and boxes. The methods used for storing the vegetables including spreading them on the floor, freezing, and covering them with pieces of cloth. The challenges in the business include rotten, pest attack, poor storage facility, and lack of ready market. The best way to manage risk is to reduce the price, adopt proactive measures and avoid taking large quantity of goods from your suppliers. The heightened interest in supporting sustainability, resilience and agility of SMEs is compelling businesses to consider the essence of managing risk. This study will be significant in identifying the best practices for preserving vegetables among market women. Unearthing the best practices for preserving vegetables will set the agenda for proper review of some practices, which do not promote business sustainability. It is important to update policy makers on the best practices for promoting business sustainability of SMEs with the view that such information would help to inform future policy decision-making.

**Keywords:** *SMEs, Market Women, Vegetables, Business Sustainability*

# Business as a conduit for achieving the

## Sustainable Development Goals

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### **Abstract**

Sustainable business (SB) and sustainable development (SD) have long been touted, particularly within academic and industrial spheres, to be intrinsically linked. In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that defined the path for achieving social, economic, and environmental sustainability towards a ‘better world’ agenda for humanity. One of the key factors that have been generally recognised as having a great potential to contribute to achieving the SDGs is sustainable business (SB). Although scholarly discourses that analyse the impact of SBs on SDGs and vice versa abound, the focus on the SB-SDGs nexus as well as the pathways where SB and SDGs interact, remains marginal and unclear. Also, while the objective and scope of the SDGs are far-reaching and encompassing, the fundamental pathways that SB can meaningfully contribute to making the SDGs have the desired impact on SD remain inadequately explored. The aim of this paper is to contribute to a better understanding and appreciation of these issues by unpacking the SB-SDGs nexus, and the nuances thereof. Specifically, the objective is to examine the SB-SDGs nexus, highlight the role of SB in achieving the SDGs, and show how SB can be leveraged to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. The paper uses the critical literature review approach. Data were gathered from scholarly literature from published and unpublished sources. Guided by the Tripple Bottom Line (TBL) philosophy. The data were synthesized to provide insights into issues at the intersection of SB and SDGs, and their attendant dynamics. The paper finds that SB and the SD are mutually supportive and reinforcing, and that no matter how large or small, or regardless of the industry, all SBs can contribute to SD and the achievement of the SDGs. However, for SBs to meaningfully propel the SD/SDGs wheels, entrepreneurs must understand and appreciate the concept of SD and SDGs, set SD/SDG-driven goals, and prioritize which goals the enterprise can best contribute to. Additionally, entrepreneurs of SBs need to integrate the goals into their business strategy, taking into account the appropriate model. There is the need for a TBL-underpinned framework for integrating the SDGs in SB strategy. To effectively leverage SB for SD, entrepreneurs must accept the responsibility to do this, undertake self-assessment, design and implement a strategic green plan, as well

as monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan/strategy. The paper concludes that addressing issues at the intersection of SBs and SD/SDGs requires interactions among a wide range of stakeholders within and across various local, regional, national, and global scales, including the UN, governments, multilateral and bilateral partners, civil society organizations, and the general business community. Business-related policymakers should ensure that their policies capture the multiple dynamic interactions between SB and SD/SDGs, recognising that although integrating SD and the SDGs in business strategies will surely come at a cost, the associated social, economic and environmental benefits will ultimately exceed the cost, in the interest of humanity.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Development Goals, Tripple Bottom Line, multilateral and bilateral partners*

## Mediating Effects of Retirement Risk Perception and Adaptation

## Intention on Retirement Risk Awareness and Retirement Planning

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### **Abstract**

The study examined the mediating effects of retirement risk perception and adaptation intention on the relationship between retirement risk awareness and retirement planning. The study embraced the positivist paradigm by relying on a quantitative research approach and an explanatory research design. Data was collected from 406 informal sector workers in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Results revealed a significant positive link between retirement risk awareness and retirement planning. Retirement risk perception and adaptation intention mediated the relationship between retirement risk awareness and retirement planning.

**Keywords:** *Retirement risk perception, retirement risk awareness, retirement planning*

# Implications of Monitoring and Evaluation

## Systems for SMEs in some selected Metropolis in Ghana

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### **Abstract**

The study's purpose was to examine how monitoring and evaluation systems affect small and medium-sized businesses in selected Ghanaian metropolis. The objectives were to evaluate the evaluation system in the chosen SMEs, evaluate the monitoring system in the chosen SMEs, test the impact of monitoring and evaluation systems on the sustainability of the business, analyze the impact of monitoring and evaluation systems on the resilience of the business, and examine the impact of monitoring and evaluation systems on the growth of the business. The research design used was explanatory. Five metropolises were chosen for the study, including Sunyani, Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, and Tamale. The sample size for the study was 423 SMEs. The primary data collection tool was a self-administered questionnaire. Data was collected, cleaned, and coded before being entered into statistical software programs like SPSS and SmartPLS. For the studies key findings, it was noted that the SMEs that took part in the study had monitoring and evaluation practices in place. The third and fourth objectives showed that monitoring and evaluation systems had a significant effect on both business resilience and business sustainability, respectively. It was discovered that monitoring and evaluation systems had a large and favourable effect on business growth and the digitalisation business respectively, for objectives 5 and 6. The study recommended that managers of SMEs within the selected area improve upon their monitoring and evaluation systems. This will increase the effect it will have on their resilience, growth, sustainability and digitalisation.

**Keywords:** *Monitoring, Evaluation, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises*



# Ghanaian SMEs Readiness for

## AfCFTA Implementation

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### **Abstract**

As a host country for the AfCFTA Secretariat, Ghana must strategically be prepared to capitalize on the trade and investment opportunities that AfCFTA offers in order to hasten the expansion and growth of its economy. Therefore, this paper seeks to evaluate the readiness of Ghanaian SMEs for AfCFTA implementation. In order to present organized data regarding the researched variables, the research used both primary and secondary methodologies and a descriptive research methodology. To find out SMEs' level of readiness for AfCFTA implementation, the study randomly selected 250 SMEs from the manufacturing, service, merchant/trading, and construction sectors. Structured questionnaires were used to gather preliminary data from the SMEs. According to the study's findings, there is a significant gap in Ghanaian SME's level of perception, knowledge, and readiness for AfCFTA implementation that needs to be closed in order to fully implement the AfCFTA. Although the majority of SMEs are capable of innovation, developing new products, and having access to the market, others also have limited knowledge of export certificates/documentation, access to trade information and infrastructure, and access to trade finance and funding for expansion. Ghanaian SMEs also have low knowledge and understanding of the AfCFTA's benefits, advantages, components, protocols, and AfCFTA Rules of Origin. The high cost of production, border delays, poor infrastructure, competition, high inflation, lack of information on AfCFTA, difficulty in accessing credit, and language problems are just a few of these obstacles. Based on the findings, the study has made a number of recommendations: The ability of SMEs needs to be retooled in order to improve their readiness for and awareness of the implementation of the AfCFTA, particularly the AfCFTA Rules of Origin, objectives, components, and Ghana's trade policy. Businesses should concentrate more on value addition, and be dedicated to looking for ways to enhance current or existing products in order to outperform comparable products from other African nations and also have skillful expertise and personnel to help them.

**Keywords:** *AfCFTA implementation, SMEs, investment opportunities*

# The Impact and Resilience of Mauritian SMEs:

## Sales Dynamics during and Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has left an indelible mark on the global economy, significantly impacting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Mauritius. This study investigates the sales dynamics of local SMEs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a quantitative survey, data was collected on sales performance before, during, and post-pandemic to gain comprehensive insights into the challenges faced and the adaptive strategies employed by these businesses. The findings underscore the challenges that the majority of participants encountered during the pandemic, with a notable decline in sales emerging as a central concern. The study reveals the diverse measures adopted by these enterprises to navigate the unprecedented economic turbulence. Notably, many turned to online sales channels, implemented cost-cutting measures, and adjusted their workforce. Furthermore, our research sheds light on the perceptions of government intervention among these businesses. A significant proportion expressed satisfaction with the government's response, believing in its effectiveness. This study offers valuable insights into the multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local SMEs in Mauritius and identifies the strategies adopted by these enterprises to adapt to the continually evolving economic landscape. These findings hold significance for policymakers, business proprietors, and other stakeholders as they craft and implement strategies to support and rejuvenate local businesses in the post-pandemic era.

**Keywords:** *Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), Sales Dynamics, Economic Impact, Adaptive Strategies, Government Intervention, Mauritius.*

# Entrepreneurial Networking, Innovation, and Sustainable

## Growth of Small Enterprises in Ghana

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the effects of entrepreneurial networking, operationalised as network isomorphism and social capital, on the sustainable growth of small enterprises and the role of innovation in the hypothesised relationship. The study employed a survey design and used questionnaires to collect data from 319 small enterprises which were sampled from the Association of Ghana Industries and Ghana Enterprise Agency using the quota sampling technique. Face-to-face technique was used to gather the data that were analysed using the covariance-based structural equation modelling. The paper found that entrepreneurial networking has a significant positive influence on sustainable growth of small enterprises and the influence is strongly mediated by innovation. The paper further revealed that compared with network isomorphism, network social capital has a superior effect on the sustainable growth of small enterprises in Ghana. Small enterprises that tap into valuable network resources to drive internal innovation should experience sustainable growth whereas those that do not leverage the power of entrepreneurial networking miss the opportunity to access critical resources for innovation and sustainable growth. This research advocates for networking as a portfolio of accessible entrepreneurial resources and provides policy support to overcome resource and growth constraints facing small enterprises, thereby advancing efforts toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG Goals 1, 8 and 9). This paper goes beyond the resource-based view by integrating the institutional theory of network isomorphism and network theory of social capital to offer a new holistic entrepreneurial network model, delineating the leverage mechanisms which facilitate access to network resources. The paper offers a practical strategy aimed at enhancing the chances of small enterprises to attain sustainable growth through innovation.

**Keywords:** *entrepreneurial networking, Sustainable Development Goals, sustainable growth*

# Bridging Labour Demand and Supply through

## Labour Market-Oriented Qualification

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**Abstract**

Aligning education and training programmes to the requirements of the labor market is critical to enhancing the employability and self-employment prospects of graduates. This study aimed to identify constraints and demand-supply mismatches as well as qualification requirements in the Ethiopian labor market. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Both primary and secondary data were captured from 13 Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS). Primary data were also gathered from participants from the private sector, government agencies, industry associations, professional associations as well as other relevant stakeholders. The online survey was conducted through Google form and checklists were employed for focus group discussions. Descriptive analysis was employed to analyse data and triangulation was done by combining responses from different targets and using a mix of approaches to validate findings. Results indicate that the labour market in Ethiopia is highly fragmented and mostly driven by the supply side. Data shows that there is an excess supply of labour in most sectors leading to unemployment. On the flip side of the coin, there is a critical mismatch between the demand and supply of labour as there are skill gaps on the graduates' side. Respondents pointed out that it is relatively difficult to find graduates well acquainted with industry-specific technical skills, communication skills as well as transferable skills. Enhancing practice-oriented education through strong university-industry linkage is identified by employers as a critical step to improve the skills mismatch in the labour market. Employers have also indicated that with strong regulatory frameworks, a platform should be created to engage the industry in the education system and create a mutually beneficial system for University-Industry. It is recommended that regulatory bodies develop national qualification frameworks to address the skills mismatch in the labour market. It is also

recommended that industry-specific labour market-oriented qualification measures be implemented by the Ministry of Education in partnership with actors and stakeholders who have a critical role in the higher education system.

**Keywords:** *University of Applied Sciences, Labour Market, Qualification Measures, Qualification Frameworks*

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