


	<p style="text-align: center;">CAREED 8th Annual Conference 27th – 28th June 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST of SCOTLAND UWS</p>	
<p><i>Title of the Paper</i></p>	<p>Trust in Cross-Border Trade: <i>Examining the Case of Women in Exporting SMEs in Ghana.</i></p>	
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<p><i>*Purpose of the paper</i></p>	<p>The purpose of this study is to examine the evolving concept of Trust, and how it has become the facilitating tool in establishing, fostering, and even repairing business relationships among West African entrepreneurs. It aims to investigate the entrepreneurial perceptions of formal institutional environments and how they shape relationships among women entrepreneurs in exporting SMEs.</p> <p>This research seeks to identify the types of trust facilitating the internationalisation of women-owned SMEs in Ghana, and how they have navigated through limited access to finance, unfavourable exchange rates, all in an ecosystem void of reliable formal institutions (Buame, 2012; Amoako, 2018; Omeihe, 2023).</p> <p>This study analyses how the concept of Trust presents an opportunity for enhancing networking, relationship-building, and cooperation crucial for increasing export earnings and overall economic growth in Ghana (Child et al., 2002; Lyon and Amoako, 2014).</p>	
<p><i>*Design/methodology/ approach</i></p>	<p>To achieve our purpose of study, we adopt a comprehensive methodology that integrates the complementary perspectives of institutional theory (Amenta and Edwin 1998), institutional logics (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999; Omeihe, 2023), mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman, 2010) and feminist theory (Brush 1992, Hurley 1991, Greer and Greene 2003) to empirically investigate the environments shaping exporting entrepreneurship among women in</p>	

	<p>Ghana. This method is distinctive in its focus on situating the structural challenges these women encounter and how they overcome them.</p> <p>The methodology to be used is qualitative, where interviews are conducted and focus group discussions are organised with 40 women entrepreneurs in exporting SMEs in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors in Ghana are interviewed.</p> <p>Accounting to more than 40% of the 70% enterprising economy of Ghana, the choice of women in SMEs in Ghana presents a unique perspective for examining the impact that women entrepreneurs exert on emerging economies (Chitakunye and Takhar 2018). Manufacturing and agriculture sectors have been selected based on their collective contribution of 65% to Ghana’s GDP (Statista 2021).</p> <p>Following recommendation by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) and Omeihe and Omeihe (2024), our sampling strategy will be purposeful rather than random, and from diverse ages and ethnic groups in Ghana, all in the aim of advancing current theoretical frameworks.</p> <p>We will leverage knowledge gathered on the population, with a focus on a diverse array of entrepreneurs operating within both the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. The deliberate distinction between sectors aims to mitigate the risk of incidental associations (Yin, 2014). Selection of respondents will be guided by a comparison of their perceptions and experiences within their respective environments. This strategy enables us to address the frequently overlooked economic and social challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs.</p>
<p><i>*Findings</i></p>	<p>We anticipate that our findings will underscore the importance of trust in navigating challenging economic environments as in Ghana. They will be presented as a series of insightful encounters that demonstrate how these women entrepreneurs can leverage trust within an array of unconventional network structures, including trade unions, family ties, religious and cultural affiliations.</p>
<p><i>Practical implications</i> (if applicable)</p>	

<p><i>*Originality/value of paper</i></p>	<p>Novelty is what this study stands to signify, as it sheds light on the insufficient exploration of women in the exporting entrepreneurial landscape of Ghana and West Africa.</p> <p>It underscores the critical need for precise insights into this area of study, offers a substantial response to prevailing perspectives that have historically overlooked the challenges faced by both women and entrepreneurs in Ghana.</p> <p>What sets this study apart is its contextual nature, delving into unexplored territories within entrepreneurial contexts, which distinguishes it from others.</p>
<p><i>**Key Words</i></p>	<p>Trust, Women, Entrepreneurship, Institutions, Ghana</p>
<p><i>Paper Type (theoretical or empirical)</i></p>	<p>Empirical Developmental</p>

