

# Wine export in Africa: building trust in B2B relationship

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## Abstract

*Purpose:* Our paper focuses on building trust between African wine importers and foreign trade partners. Our main research question concerns the effects of commitment and relationship value on trust in a B2B relationship with Africans importers. Moreover how African cultures can affect these effects is another point of great interest.

*Design/methodology/approach:* We used both quantitative and qualitative analyses and two groups of supplier's respondents were created depending on whether the respondents were from a French speaking African country (FSA) or an English speaking African country (ESA). We used first quantitative analysis conducted through the structural equation model with latent variable (SEML); and secondly qualitative analysis based on semi-structured interviews. In our quantitative approach, participants were sent an online survey between July and September 2019. The structural equation model with latent variable (SEML) was estimated using partial least square (PLS) (Walter et al., 2000). For the qualitative analysis, data were collected through semi-directive interviews with open-ended questions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Participants were interviewed either by WhatsApp-calling or face-to-face in the city of Bordeaux in France and note-taking was adopted.

*Findings:* The results showed that to export wine in Africa markets, relationship and commitment variables have a significant direct positive effect on customer's trust, with a little dominance of the relationship value's effect. The findings reveal also some cultural specificities and drivers evoked by Africans as essentials to increase commitment, relationship and trust, i.e., benevolence, similarity, reputation and attractive price more emphasized in French speaking African countries.

*Practical implications:* These results highlight the need to train employees to focus on some key attributes of relationship marketing, expected to create trust with Africans buyers over time. As being benevolent, honest, committed, aware of Africans expectations and building close and interpersonal relationships with Africans.

**Key words:** wine, trust, commitment, Africa, B2B

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Even if Africa is not an easy place to do business, it may be a high profitable market (Leke et al., 2018). Since wine markets in Africa are mainly import markets, the necessity for African wine importers to have strong relationships with partners of different cultures is of great interest. Understanding African customer's culture is important to build trust (Darley and Blankson, 2008). Our paper focuses on building trust between African wine importers and foreign trade partners.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reciprocal commitment and long-term relationships have been proved to play an important role in building trust in B2B relationship (Wetzels et al., 1998). Trust and commitment have been described as critical antecedents to inter-organizational collaboration (Fan et al., 2012). Trust reduces the perceived risk in a relationship and thus leads to commitment in the relationship (Ganesan, 1994). If a supplier is not perceived to be competent and honest enough, the customer can show no commitment towards the relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Increasing the customer's expectations and building strong exchange relationships is even critical to build trust (Chang et al., 2016).

## 3. MAIN PROBLEM TO BE INVESTIGATED AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

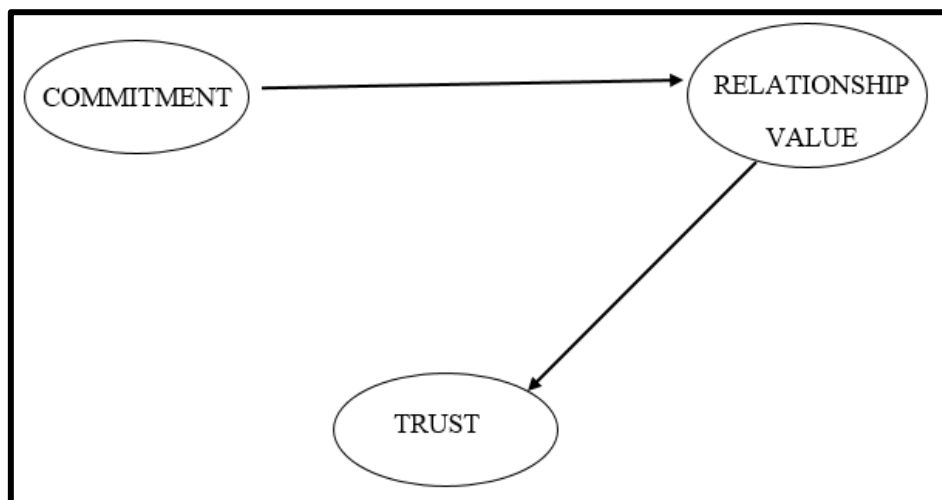
Our main research question concerns the effects of commitment and relationship value on trust in a B2B relationship with Africans importers. Moreover how African cultures can affect these effects is another point of great interest. Given above arguments, we formulated the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Relationship value has a positive and direct effect on trust.

**H2:** Commitment has a positive and direct effect on relationship value.

**H3:** Commitment has a positive and indirect effect on trust.

*Figure 1: Commitment-Trust-Relationship Conceptual Model*



#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We used both quantitative and qualitative analyses and two groups of supplier's respondents were created depending on whether the respondents were from a French speaking African country (FSA) or an English speaking African country (ESA). We used first quantitative analysis conducted through the structural equation model with latent variable (SEML); and secondly qualitative analysis based on semi-structured interviews.

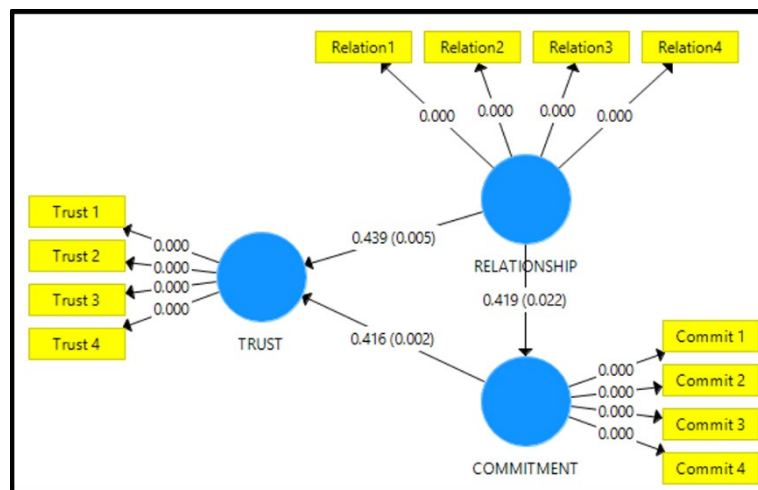
**Table 1:** Sample composition

FSA	Cameroon	Ivory-Coast	Morocco	Togo	Burkina-Faso	Benin	DRC	Congo
ESA	Nigeria	Ghana	Kenya	Tanzania				

In our quantitative approach, participants were sent an online survey between July and September 2019. The structural equation model with latent variable (SEML) was estimated using partial least square (PLS) (Walter et al., 2000). For the qualitative analysis, data were collected through semi-directive interviews with open-ended questions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Participants were interviewed either by WhatsApp-calling or face-to-face in the city of Bordeaux in France and note-taking was adopted.

#### 5. PRELIMINARY RESULTS

**Figure 1:** Estimated model



**Table 1:** Testing for the presence of indirect effects

	Indirect effect	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
RELATIONSHIP -> COMMITMENT -> TRUST	0,174	1,658	<b>0,097</b>
RELATIONSHIP -> TRUST	0,174	1,658	<b>0,097</b>

The results showed that to export wine in Africa markets, relationship and commitment variables have a significant direct positive effect on customer's trust, with a little dominance of the relationship value's effect. The findings reveal also some cultural specificities and drivers evoked by Africans as essentials to increase commitment, relationship and trust, i.e., benevolence, similarity, reputation and attractive price more emphasized in FSA.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Through the presentation of factors cited by Africans as limitations of international wine business - due to the lack of trust - it is essential to build trust by increasing relationship and commitment between suppliers and importers. These results highlight the need to train employees to focus on some key attributes of relationship marketing, expected to create trust with Africans buyers over time. As being benevolent, honest, committed, aware of Africans expectations and building close and interpersonal relationships with Africans.

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