

OUT OF (AND INTO) AFRICA

Second International Conference: African Consumer Marketing, Firm Strategies and Society



About the Conference

Major changes for this edition of the Conference include the following:

1. **Online conference format:** This change is warranted to manage COVID-19 pandemic consequences and will also lower costs for attendees. Hybrid plenary sessions across venues may be warranted if conditions allow.
2. **Multi-HBCU involvement:** Following the initiative led by the Graves School of Business & Management at Morgan State University, we wish to expand engagement across the HBCU community in enhancing leadership of business and marketing scholarship regarding Africa.
3. **Three “divisions” or programs to the conference:** In addition to the Firm Strategy (firm-level research) and Consumer Marketing (consumer-level research), a third division/program of Society & Institutions was added to capture the macro-level research that addresses public policy and institutions that are intertwined with business and entrepreneurship development.

It is expected that the online delivery of the conference will generate **greater scholarly participation from the African continent** and, indeed, some other parts of the world. It is also expected that the pan-HBCU scope in conference preparation will further enhance the reach and attractiveness of this conference. To be clear, though, submissions are invited from ALL academic institutions across the world, provided that the scholarship has an African context or focus.

Before the pandemic this year, African consumer and business spending was expected to grow beyond \$4 trillion, with a striking demographic dividend indicated by a massive working-age population that will be larger than either China or India by 2034, abundant resources, and fast-paced growth (McKinsey, 2016). While the current pandemic has caused a recessionary environment across the continent, it has also created opportunities (and challenges) for entrepreneurship and small & medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (World Economic Forum, 2020). Innovative solutions including products/services have been introduced in various countries across the continent in response to the pandemic - which may have far-reaching implications well after the current pandemic subsides in Africa and across the globe.

The past few years have witnessed cross-fertilization of African-born entrepreneurship and innovation into other parts of the world, along with growth opportunities for MNCs and SMEs into Africa. We firmly believe that the time is ripe for an updated showcase of scholarly insights regarding international business in this under-studied continent - including, and especially, insights and strategy/tactics that originated from Africa. This conference will also mark a significant step toward creating a sustained effort among HBCUs - with Morgan leadership - to connect with Africa in business-related research at both the micro and macro level. Despite the promising social economic development in Africa and foreign marketers' enthusiasm toward its future growth, there is limited market or consumer research for marketing practitioners (McKinsey's, 2012). The literature review shows that existing knowledge on African consumption and behavior is fragmented.