BUSINESS EDUCATION IN THE E-WORLD: ISSUES, TRENDS, CHALLENGES
AND STRATEGIES IN AFRICA

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Abstract
This paper is based purely on the review of literature and indications emerging from the review. The paper covers the impact of changing business environment on the functioning and offerings of business education. It discusses business education in the E-World and identifies issues and challenges as well as trends and strategies in Africa. Strategies for effective teaching of business education students have been proposed. The strategies include: the integration of business ethic courses in the business education curriculum, training and retraining of business educators; engaging students in competency-based training and the adoption of online learning in teaching.

Keywords: Business Education; E-World; Trends; Challenges; Strategies

Introduction
The future of business higher education in the 21st Century in Africa will involve dramatic changes that will lead to a vastly different business education environment than we have today. By recognizing opportunities and preparing strategies to embrace these changes, business schools will be better able to prepare for what lies ahead. Recent technological advancements also offer both tremendous challenges and significant opportunities for business school administrators as they guide their institutions into the future.

The mission statement of any business education institution must describe the school’s values and who their customers are. It is a statement of purpose and focuses on the present and future. As a result, the mission statement addresses the end goal of the institution. Business schools have multiple end goals including educating students, fostering economic and community development and providing meaningful community service. While the education of students is the primary end goal, the issues, trends, challenges and strategies that directly impact those end goals of business schools include funding opportunities, business accreditation, globalization efforts, entrepreneurship programs, energy and sustainability initiatives, executive education offerings, and enrollment management efforts, changes in technology, demographic shifts, and curriculum efforts. This paper examines significant issues, trends, challenges and strategies related to business schools and addresses what the future holds for business schools in Africa.

Issues
Research studies has shown that business education in Africa has massive challenges including accessibility to the masses, empowering youth, promoting entrepreneurship, the rapid rate of technological development and remaining relevant to the
context and to the challenges of growing globalization (Heaton, 2008 and Bruton, 2008). It is also realized that understanding technological advancements and market needs, only few players in the market are exercising various mode of delivery which ranges from traditional and effective contact classes, distance education model, open distance learning and mixed mode of learning (Purushottam and Rwelamila, 2016). Literature indicates that in Africa, the demand for business education is higher than its supply (Bruton, 2008) and this situation makes this market attractive. As indicated by Mahajan (2008) in his book “Africa Rising” that the youth of Africa is going to be the main source of demand for various products especially the product of youth and business education.

It is important business education institutes understand these scenarios and focus on managing the challenge of keeping balance between academic and research rigour, affordability and accessibility. It is therefore clear that educators and business education policy makers in Africa will need a sober reflection and a clear domain of implementable scenarios to work from in order to address the complexity of forces of change in business education in Africa in the medium to long term. The following salient questions could guide any strategic initiatives towards sustainable business education in Africa:

- What is the position of Africa among other continents in offering business education and impact on the issues of globalization, privatization, technology advancement and changing demographics?
- What are appropriate modes of delivery are there typical modes or hybrids to suit different environments?
- What are overarching and key knowledge base areas for sustainable skill?
- What are appropriate models for bridging the gap between research and practice as building blocks for sustainable business education?
- What are the nature of demands from employers (private and public) and professional organizations on continuing professional development?

**Trends**

Recent changes in the external environment, such as internalization of education, technological innovations as well as labour market demands for new skills, inevitably lead to a shift in perception about business education and society expectations about the institutions. The importance of developing not only academic or practical knowledge, but also skills, such as the ability for creative problem solving, are crucial for business students as for potential enablers of innovations (Schlee. et al, 2014).

During the last decade business schools have launched different programs and adjusted their curricula and campus experience to address ethnical and cultural differences of their students.

Addressing the new teaching challenges the faculty of business school has to reassess their teaching methods; some of the schools have created business projects to intensify project-based learning method with virtual entrepreneurial experience.
In Africa business education today should not be seen as only training in subjects for further business administration, but also solid partnership and networking, actualized curricula and flexible teaching methods. The trends are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 1: Business education trends and examples, years 2010-2016 (Nikitina and Lapina, 2017)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Business Education Trends</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Partnership and networking</td>
<td>With Higher Education Institutions, educational technology organizations, business entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Curricula are highly responsive to the needs of society and business</td>
<td>Including subjects that are not related to business administration directly (such as ethics), and improving creativity and problem solving skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flexible teaching methods</td>
<td>Online education, dramatic arts, problem-based learning, project-based learning, virtual business projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Different methods for different international students to increase their cultural and academic competences</td>
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</table>

**Figure 1:** Modern Trends in Business Education
I) **Partnership and Network**

Partnership and network in universities and business communities goes a long way to benefit students and staff as they involve in innovative and entrepreneurial activities through internships, conferences, research projects, seminars, and consequently apply their knowledge in the real world environment. Gawel, 2014 argued that all these actions help to increase the level of satisfaction of companies with their employees' abilities. While Plewa, Galán-Muros and Davey, (2015) noted that there is increase employability of students. Additionally, a dialogue between universities and business is required to increase the quality of entrepreneurship education and the number of start-ups in countries where entrepreneurship hostile environments serve as a motivation for policymakers to promote entrepreneurship education (Walter and Block, 2016).

ii) **Curricula response to the needs of society and business**

The key movements and events in the external environment enable the development of business education. Corporate bankruptcy scandals in recent times hasallowed many researchers to criticize the moral and ethical aspects of business education hence many researchers reveal the importance of addressing ethical issues in business education and even reveal new directions in leadership pedagogy to increase the role of Higher Education Institutions in society.

iii) **Flexible and contemporary teaching methods**

Bartram (2005) defines Competency-based training/learning (CBT) or Competency Based Education and Training as an approach to teaching and learning more often used in learning concrete skills than abstract learning. One of the primary features of CBT is that each learner's achievement is measured against the competency standards set by industry, rather than against the achievement of other learners. Under the CBT approach, each learner is assessed to find the gap between the skills they need (as described in the Training Package) and the skills they already have. However, the learning outcomes achieved through the curriculum are derived from the competencies described in the training package. Competency-based training programmes are often comprised of modules broken into segments called learning outcomes, which are based on standards set by industry, and assessment is designed to ensure each student has achieved all the outcomes (skills and knowledge) required by each module (Smith & Nangle, 1995).

iv) **Review on business education trends and sub-trends**

It has been observed that during the last decade the most researched areas of business education are collaboration between universities, businesses and government and its barriers, as well as mutual curriculum development. Apart from it, courses delivery over the internet, life-long education, importance of interpersonal (another) skills development for business students, match of education and future occupation, and international orientation of business schools have been researched quite substantially. As represented in Table 2, due to the implementation of literature overview method the following findings about the trends and their sub-trends have been observed.
Table 2: Groups of trends based on mapping literature review (Nikina & Lapina, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Sub-trends</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triple helix model /University, business, and policy makers’ cooperation</td>
<td>Adjustments in curricula to increase employability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperation between universities, businesses, and policy makers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of connections with industry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collaborative research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Importance of dedicated resource allocation to maintain the relationships between faculty and business</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Curriculum design and development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Higher Education Institution (HEI) image in labour market</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence- based training</td>
<td>Development of entrepreneurial competences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Generating productive innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching challenges</td>
<td>Importance of competence based education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Problem-based/case-based learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Faculty development to understand entrepreneurship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethical leadership</td>
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<td>Critically assessed role modern organization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessing HEI strategy to define role of online education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online education &amp; Massive Open Online Courses</td>
<td>Important role of online education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Limited funding in HEI Free education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding issues</td>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Presence of international students on campus</td>
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Answering the research question “What are the current trends in business education in Africa?” the following observations have been made:

University and business cooperation (UBC) as well as university, business, and policy makers' synergy, and Triple Helix model implementation is widely discussed addressing it from different perspectives, such as:

- Adjustments in curricula to respond to labour market challenges
- Importance of connections and relationships between the parties
- Significance of collaborative researches and case studies development
- The importance of competence-based education is raised, especially the development of entrepreneurial competences
- Problem-based or case-based teaching method is evaluated as significant for the student-oriented approach.

Globalization and internalization of the modern world is an important aspect that affects business education all around the world.
On the basis of different research results, researchers have collected the following set of factors affecting the development of business education in recent years:

1. Higher Educational Institutions collaboration with businesses, policy makers, and students in curriculum design has a positive effect on the outcome of educational programs in business schools.
2. Competency-oriented approach in curricula design increases the employability of graduates and prepares them for life-long learning.
3. Use of IT enables application of new teaching methods and fosters the development of online education as well as enhances the availability of training in business disciplines worldwide and promotes free higher education.
4. Ethics, social responsibility and principles of responsible management education stimulate critical leadership approach in teaching future business leaders that raise many challenges for educators in terms of the courses design and student-oriented teaching methods.

Challenges

i) Historical Perspectives influencing Business Education
Since the inception of business education in the early part of the 20th century, the discipline was shaped by the forces of the market place. Business education was not created based on research and scientific methods, but it evolved based on industry procedures and practices that were later compiled into business theory and textbooks (Pierson, 1959). In the post world war II era, there was strong demand for business graduates driven by the business expansion that occurred, which intensified the need for business managers. Pierson (1959) found that the most acute problem in business education was the lack of strong academic standards needed to produce scholarly graduates at the four-year college level. The challenges then were that the business field was new, and the daily aspects of business careers had remote connections to academic work that was taught at the college level.

ii) Inherent Discipline Problems
The market demands a variety of skills in business graduates, and thus the training of some graduates may need to be different than others. With the broadening of the business discipline in sub-functional areas such as marketing, accounting, finance, and management, it is difficult to balance the appropriate training for the mentioned areas. In man cases, business programs opted to teach what was offered by other schools rather than originating new programs customized to the various sub-areas.

iii) Institutional Factors
Other factors adding to the problems facing business education are related to the institutions, and the faculty and administrators within it. The proliferation of business institutions persisted post the 1980s to the 21st century. This created a resource problem to institutions in terms of business faculty. The AACS (2002) reported a shortage of business faculty, especially at the doctoral level. In certain business disciplines such as accounting, over half the faculty in business institutions were professionally qualified rather than academically
qualified to teach, meaning that they have not attained a doctoral degree, but it must be both. Additionally, business faculty had significant pressure placed upon them due to the dynamic changing environment in business in terms of technology and globalization.

Pearce (1993) explained that business education requires faculty that adapts easily to new pedagogy and curriculum design. Because the business field demands that faculty learn new skills all the time, faculty with only an academic background and little practical experience may be less willing to constantly shift their training to new areas, especially faculty who have achieved tenure. Faculty members who are tenured are less flexible and less willing to always train to catch up with industry. This system of traditional tenure makes it difficult to have an updated and motivated training force for students. In addition, it is not possible to lay off incompetent faculty members whose skills are no longer in demand. At a time when business programs are being asked to do more with less resource, this phenomenon places a significant restriction on institutions (Porter & McKibbon, 1988).

iv) **Limitations of Academic Business Research**

A major issue causing a significant rift between academia and industry is the disconnectedness between academic research and the market. Faculty academic research that is underwritten by business donors to colleges and universities has been less than responsive to critical issues faced by executives day to day. Business research should lead to improved business practices business methods that lead to higher productivity. There is little evidence that business research is connected to the industry's critical issues that are faced in the field (Pearce, 1993). The past AACSB president in 1993, Lawrence McKibbon, emphasized that business research should be done in collaboration with business partners working directly on issues relevant to business. Moreover, students pursuing doctoral programs can pursue their research in industry working with corporate managers. This is beneficial not just to the students who may potentially intern in business but it is also helpful to business executives who may receive exposure to research methods taught to Ph.D. students. Also, more collaborative research agenda may develop from Ph.D. students and executives joining forces. The idea of integrating experience with academia is certainly a positive one, but the challenge is in implementation of such a plan and also faculty members who have been privileged with academic freedom may not desire for their research agenda to be dictated by industry. A balancing approach between academic freedom and collaboration with industry will have to guide the change in business research.

v) **Globalization and Diversity**

One of the challenges identified is the rapid growth of globalization, which is intensifying the need to bolster international business education. Employers have commented that the curriculum in business schools lags behind the true scale of the globalization strategy in their operations (AACSB, 2002). All business schools in Africa have been affected by global business trends and international business activity, forcing these institutions to develop international curriculum to prepare students to work in a global business environment. This content had to be developed at a rapid pace, and largely came from expertise obtained from professionals in the field (AACSB, 2002). This is another prime example of how business
education is not developed by research but rather as documented case studies from the industry. Often, this type of content is more challenging to standardize and compare with other academic disciplines in quality and scientific method. Yet the market demands students who are able to interact with diverse groups in order to conduct business and develop effective business strategies appropriate for the respective culture (Martensson & Bild. et al., 2008).

vi) **Technological Influences**

Another challenge to the field is the technological race between the business environment and educational institutions. The latter has a limited amount of resources to introduce and replicate technology to help train graduates. Employers demand graduates who can leverage technology and can advance the company's strategy and operation. This creates widening gaps between colleges that can afford to keep up with technological advances and the ones that are unable to afford the needed investment. It also forces colleges to insert more technological courses in the business curriculum that are considered descriptive rather than analytical further pushing the discipline away from the liberal arts (AACSB, 2002). Other obstacles to inserting technology in the curriculum include faculty's discomfort level with new technologies; academicians whose background is mostly theoretical with limited business practical experience are reluctant to utilize new software and business technology in the classroom (Pearce, 1993). [Lana Nino, 2010]

**Strategies**

It is important for business education students who will form part of the stakeholders in the organization in future to be educated on standard institutional activities that are undertaken with due diligence and accountability to meet organizational objectives. Thus Obiete et al, 2015 suggest the following strategies for educating business education students for industries in tertiary institution in Africa. These strategies include:

1. **Integration of Business Ethics Courses in the Business Education Curriculum:** education is the strongest correlate to and predictor of cognitive moral development and ethical maturity. Heron (2007) asserted that cognitive moral development is considered to be one of the critical personal characteristics influencing the entire ethics decision-making process. Similarly, Neubaum, Pagell, Drexler, McKee-Ryan and Larson (2009) averred that ethics can be taught, and that educational programs that integrate the study of ethical theory with its practical application can be highly effective. In consonance, Cavico and Mujtaba (2009) opined that if the society is concerned about the behavior of its business people, then it is quite appropriate that a business ethics course becomes a required course in business school curriculum.

2. **Training and Retraining Business Education Lecturers:** since there has been a downward trend in the quality of business education graduates, it suffices to say that the quality of teaching these graduates received while in school is below standard and has reflected in their inability to function effectively in corporate business environments. It is in
light of the above, and the need to produce quality business education graduates that it has become very important for the training and retraining of business education lecturers on modern practices like transparency and accountability, the legal and regulatory environment, appropriate risk management measures, information flows and the responsibility of senior management and the board of directors. These lecturers can be trained through organization of seminars, conferences and professional courses in co-operate governance.

3. **Engaging students in Competency-Based Learning/Training:** It has become necessary to support the teaching of work-based learning as a program for business education school students. The purposes for work-based training are:
   - acquiring knowledge or skill related to employment in particular occupations or industries;
   - providing career exploration and planning;
   - learning all aspects of an industry;
   - increasing personal and social competence related to work in general; and
   - Enhancing students’ motivation and academic achievement.

Stasz and Brewer (1998) supported the contentions that through work-based learning students can acquire occupational and social skills, as well as information about industries and possible careers. Work-based learning is a form of experiential learning, along with learning from experience in other settings such as the school, home, the community or recreational pursuits. Work-based learning is used in vocational education and training to develop basic work habits, occupational identity, and specific occupational competences.

4. **Exposing Business Education Student to the Current Trend and best Practices of Firms:** the lecturers and coordinators of the business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Africa can promote the teaching of corporate governance and acceptable industry standard and ethics by exposing students to the current trend applied by industries in tackling issues. Some techniques for exposing students to current trends in corporate governance include:
   a. Organizing seminars for students.
   b. Inviting industry experts to talk or lecture students on acceptable standards and practices
   c. Engaging students in research on the current trends in corporate.
   d. Collaboration between business education lecturers and industry experts on counseling students.
   e. Making available internet facilities for students, so as to enable them compare the corporate governance practices in their country with those of other countries.

5. **Application of Online Teaching Method:** the integration of information and communication technology in teaching and learning of business education courses cannot be over emphasized. Evans and Howe (2007) noted that he recent corporate climate, riddled
with many high profile corporate collapses and a trend towards tightened legal regulation of the business environment, has served as a wake-up call not only to the business world, but to educators who are teaching students about complex sets of rules, which it is increasingly understood can only be truly appreciated through contextual application and situational discussion. Furthermore, Errington (2003) observed that the current methodology utilized in business education is based almost entirely on scenario-based learning including both skills-based and problem-based scenarios. Varzaly and Baron (2009) postulated that various form of technologies like the Microsoft power point, images, audio and visual technologies to create online scenarios that will help capture the students attention and improve their understanding of corporate governance. Varzaly et al (2009) also advocated the use of online role playing simulations in teaching corporate governance. Varzaly et al (2009) suggested the use of an online role play simulation for situations where there are multiple perspectives to an issue and where there is not necessarily one correct answer. The stakeholders interact via online discussion boards and other technologies. The learners adopt a role, undertake a briefing and interact and debate in order for decision-makers to make a final decision. Evans and Howe (2007) averred that optimal online scenario-based learning necessitates the use of creative methods to keep student interest, increase the breadth of student knowledge, and evaluate student learning and understanding in a manner which is time efficient. In line with the above, Varzaly et al (2009) asserted that the development of an innovative online scenario-based learning would be effective for teaching corporate governance. [Obiete et.al. ,2015]

Conclusion

Business education institutions in Africa should follow the modern trends in the development of business education and act as a driving force for the process by updating curricula in agreement with the topical changes in the external environment and should proceed proactively and incorporate the latest trends into the institution's development strategy. The trends could be grouped as follows: Partnerships and Network; Curricula response to the needs of society and business; Flexible and contemporary teaching methods. It is advisable for business schools to recognize and adjust to the dynamic environment and adjust to its influence to be able to thrive and not experience major problems. From the literature, it is clear that there is a mismatch between the training received in school and the expectations of employers of labour. These have resulted in the need to educate business education students with the necessary corporate governance knowledge that would enable them function effectively in a corporate organization. Strategies like the integration of business ethic courses in the business education curriculum, training and retraining business education lecturers, engaging students in competency based training, exposing business education student to the current trend in the corporate governance practices of firms and application of online teaching method are being recommended as some of the ways of effectively educating business education graduates for corporate governance in tertiary institutions in Africa.

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Recommendations
Administrators of Business Education Institutions in Africa should:

- Integrate the study of business ethics courses in the business education curriculum.
- Map-out training programmes that will keep the business education lecturers up-to-date on current corporate governance practices of industries across various sectors of the economy.
- Ensure students access to business, legal and related information to help keep students alerted on practices and principles of corporate governance in the early stages of their business development.
- Organize and offer mentorship opportunities to students to learn from more experienced business people. For instance, workshops, conferences, and competitions that brings together investors, business people, and government representatives.
- Adopt the use of technology in educating their students on business ethics, risk management practices, management practices and regulatory practices of business organizations in the country and abroad. This can be done through online collaboration with established industry experts.
- Adopt Competency-Based Training Methods for the training of Business Students.

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