

# **MBA (Strategic Management) program and the Industry: The missing link**

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# Introduction

- The corporate world is continuously seeking for highly qualified MBA graduates from the best universities.
- The GoK through Commission for University Education is increasingly compelling universities to review their MBA curriculum to suit market needs.
- Raised questions:
  - Do business schools/universities train their students adequately to assume managerial and Leadership positions in organizations?
  - What is the relevancy and effectiveness of MBA programs in infusing students with skills needed for the executive level in modern organizations.

# Cont' Introduction

- Business school curricula have not kept pace with the demand for more practical and realistic education.
- A study was therefore conducted to explore the expectations of Kenyan employers from MBA graduates and to identify gaps and give recommendations for a more practical MBA-SM to the corporate world.

# Methodology

- The target population was (MBA-SM) students and corporate organizations in Kenya.
- Purposive sampling -used to select five universities.
- University of Nairobi (UoN), Kenyatta University (KU), Daystar University (DU), Strathmore University (SU) and Africa Nazarene University (ANU).
- Data collected through structured questionnaires and interviews.

# Cont' Methodology

- East Africa Breweries (EABL), Kenya Airports Authority (KAA), Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA), Cooperative bank, and Compassion International.
- **Sample size:**
  - **20** (MBA-SM) students in each of the **5** selected university = hundred (**100**) students;
  - **3** managers and **5** staff members from each of the 5 selected companies = forty (**40**) members of staff.
- Thus in total, the sample size was made up of one hundred and forty (**140**) respondents.

# Results

- The MBA-SM was very relevant to the corporate and had positive impact on job performance of graduates.
- 25 staff (83.3%) reported that the program was relevant to the corporate world in Kenya and equipped MBA-SM students with competitive managerial skills.
- However it was noted that the corporate world sought for specific attributes and skills and there was need to have all-rounded graduates exhibiting more managerial skills, leadership, innovativeness and exposure on strategic management.
- Several gaps were noted which require to be addressed to make the MBA-SM program more effective.

# Cont' Results

## ***1. Failure to consult the industry in curricula development***

20 employees (66.7%) of the respondents believed that Kenyan universities don't consult the employment sector when developing or reviewing their MBA-SM curricula.

## ***2. Lack of experiential learning or simulations in the curricula***

80% of the students commended the program by stating that it had equipped and enhanced their ability to develop and effectively execute effective strategic business decisions. **However**, 17% were of contrary opinion stating that the program was more commercialized, theoretical, and lacking practical application of managerial skills during class sessions.

# Cont' Results

## ***3. Failure to use local industries case studies during learning***

90% of the students indicated that the MBA-SM program relied on international case studies while ignoring local case studies thus denying the students an opportunity to appreciate business practices in the local context.

## ***4. Not addressing specific industrial needs***

- The study found out that MBA-SM students were taught collectively in a class without paying attention to diverse needs of different industries where students worked.
- Out of the students interviewed, 60% wished that the MBA-SM program could be tailored to address specific industrial needs.
- However, 30% of the students were comfortable with the mode of delivery of the MBA-SM program.



# Cont' Results

## ***5. Failure to invite experienced expertise into class sessions***

- Most of the MBA-SM classes didn't invite experts from various industries to share with students a feel of real business experience.
- 70% students indicated that there was minimal invitation of experts from the industry to share their experiences with students.
- On the other hand, 65% of the interviewed staff members felt that universities didn't invite experts from the industry to mentor their MBA-SM students.

# Discussions

- Fundamentally, the development of any society is vested on its workforce.
- It is therefore worth noting that the call for transformational teaching or learning is urgent to ensure our students are best suited to the task.
- This therefore means making careful considerations on the environment they are nurtured, inclusive of the nature of courses they are taught.
- The world we live in today is radically dynamic thus (MBA-SM) program should equip its students with the relevant managerial skills to competitively coexist in today's dynamic corporate world.

## **Cont' Discussions**

- The study indicated that the program was relevant as offered in the Kenyan Universities.
- It was evident that the program has positively impacted on the staff, the students, and the corporate world.
- The program has been able to equip the graduates with management and leadership skills.
- In return, the students upon graduating have been able to make right changes to an organization or provide a solution to an existing problem in their organization.

# Recommendations

Based on findings of the study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- Universities offering the program should always consult with the industry when reviewing or developing their curricula and take into consideration the expectations of the industry.
- MBA-SM programs should become more practical and embrace simulations style of teaching.
- Business schools should have expertise from different fields during class sessions and bring the students into the real situations that take place at the work place (mentorship).
- MBA-SM programs should use local market scenarios as case studies in addition to international case studies when training MBA students.

# Conclusion

- The study found out that the MBA-SM program offered in Kenyan universities was relevant and adequately equipped students with the necessary managerial and leadership skills.
- However, there was need to adequately address the identified gaps to make the program more efficient and practical towards meeting industrial/corporate needs.

# Sample of related Literature

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