Status of Sustainability Management Education in African MBA Programmes: A Web-based Research Approach

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Abstract

Emerging evidence suggests that business schools in Africa are lagging behind in promoting sustainability education. Grand challenges that point to a limited focus on transformative sustainability education such as environmental pollution, conflicts, inequalities and unemployment still persist in African economies, with the profit motive remaining central to businesses' operating philosophy. Informed by the clarion call for business schools to be key drivers of sustainability education, this study reviews the African master of business administration (MBA) curricula with the objective of assessing the status of sustainability management education. The content of the MBA curricula of 42 African business schools accredited with the Association of African Business Schools was analysed using a web-based research approach. The findings indicate that the concept of sustainability has not been sufficiently embedded into the African MBA curricula. The values and mission statements of the majority of business schools were found not to be aligned with the principles of sustainability education. It was also found that shareholder value oriented modules constitute the core curriculum of the majority of MBA programmes reviewed. An incremental elective approach was found to be the most dominant strategy used by African business schools to incorporate sustainability education in the MBA curricula. An integrative approach of embedding sustainability education focusing on re-orientation of the business schools' values, mission, curriculum, systems, operations and governance is recommended. The increased use of experiential learning is also recommended as an effective teaching pedagogy for equipping MBA students with practical aspects of sustainability education.