

Globally connected, locally relevant

Scholarship of engagement by African Business Academics



Bill Buenar Puplambu, PhD C.Psychol
Central Business School
Central University College
GHANA

**IMPORTING KNOWLEDGE
FRAMEWORKS TO SOLVE LOCAL
PROBLEMS**

**GOING GLOBAL 2013
DUBAI**

The Issue

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- **In management thought, there is a manifest lack of ‘diversity’ of concepts with 4 Western countries (USA, Britain, France and Germany) being the biggest contributors to management literatures and theory**
- **But how readily applicable are the prescriptions to local situations?**
 - Nature of local situations
 - Trompenaars and lack of travel flexibility in Western management thought

Local (African) Business, Management & Administrative situations

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- **Concepts of land ownership and contract**
- **Size of SMEs**
- **Extended family presence in the public sector**
- **Goal setting and context related performance challenges**

Why weak African management scholarship?

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- **Weak support for business research in African universities**
- **Tension between global recognition (scholarship and promotion) and local relevance (consultancy and peer condescension)**
- **Artificial practitioner-researcher divide**
- **Public policy bureaucrats' 'preference' for externally generated consultancy prescriptions**

Result?

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- **Leadership development and education that talks about transformational leadership etc, not about ‘engagement’**
- **Financial intermediation that demands Corporate Governance prescriptions that do not take account of size of economies and size of SMEs**
- **Organisational changes and public sector reforms that do not build in social protection/policy/local discourses eg GH and single spine salary**

Possible Solutions?

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- **Boyer's Scholarship of engagement**
 - Discovery (local research)
 - Integration (connections across regions, disciplines...)
 - Application (practise, collaboration with end-users)
 - Knowledge transfer (teaching, development, context...)
- **University structures must support academic promotion that recognises local research and local engagement**
- **The Thai initiative – Knowledge Network Institute of Thailand (Prof. Piyawat Boon-Long)**