The African e-Journals Project has digitized full text of articles of eleven social science and humanities journals. This item is from the digital archive maintained by Michigan State University Library. Find more at: http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/africanjournals/

Available through a partnership with

Scroll down to read the article.
Book Reviews


The purpose of this book is to disseminate management knowledge among the small businessmen in Kenya. The book may conveniently be divided into seven parts, each focusing on specific topics.

Part one deals with the basics of management and includes four articles written by different authors with varied experiences in small business. In this part essentials of management, planning, time management and management problems in the family business are discussed. All these four articles are important and entrepreneurs should observe them.

The second part discusses rudiments of personnel management in small firms. Personnel management issues, proper job placement, training needs and legal issues involved in starting and managing small businesses are discussed.

The third part of this book is production management. Covered in this part are aspects of purchasing; however these seem not to have been adequately covered. The topic would have been handled better if illustrations were utilised.

One noticeable omission in this part is stock control. Stock control is an important element in that a small businessman should order the most economical quantities of various stock levels to be maintained by the business. Maintaining stock levels avoids two key problems in business, namely under-stocking and over-stocking. These two problems have their negative consequences for the small business.

Part four deals with marketing management. Marketing management is important in that producing goods alone is of little value if the goods do not reach the final consumer. The coverage here seem to be adequate for its purpose.

Financial management is covered in part five. Discussed here are sources of finance, institution lending to small businesses, programmes for small businesses, insurance and financial analysis. My view is that the content on insurance seems to have been misplaced, as it does not fall under this classification.

Part six focuses on accounting and book-keeping. The better title of this part would have been the other way around, as bookkeeping comes before accounting. In the article on introduction to basic bookkeeping, adequate illustrations are used. This makes it easier for the reader to understand the material. Whereas the article on auditing fits in this part well, the article on computers is not part of accounting.
To be included here the article should have focused on the accounting application of computers.

Finally, part seven deals with legal aspects of management. Perhaps the article on insurance could have been included in this part, or separately treated as management of risk.

This book has four basic strengths. First is that the authors are professionals with versed experiences, hence their presentation of information is quite good. Second, the more complex management subjects are divided into small articles which can easily be digested or understood. Third, the language used is quite simple to understand. This has been achieved by avoiding technical terms as much as possible. Fourth, a comprehensive glossary and in some cases illustrations have been provided. This makes it easier to follow and check up terms which are not explained in the text. Other than the problem of some articles being shorter due to different approaches by some of the authors, the book is quite useful to those wishing to start and manage small enterprises. The book provides an alternative solution to wage employment, which is self-employment. Kenya, as such, is not able to provide adequate solutions to employment except through self-employment: this view is supported by policy documents such as sessional papers and development plans. It is in this regard that this book makes essential reading.

Reviewed by G S Namusonge, Director Regional Centre for Enterprise Development, Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi.


This Discussion Paper highlights the problems and needs of modern African entrepreneurs, based on its interview findings of 36 entrepreneurs in six sub-Saharan African countries. Its findings are said to be intended for policy-makers, donors and advisers who have African development in their hearts. However, I also feel that the Paper is beneficial to future African entrepreneurs as they will gain an insight into what it takes to be an entrepreneur.

The author’s decision to write the Paper arose from an awareness of the neglect and undermining of modern African entrepreneurs. In the 66 pages, divided into two major sections, the author successfully demonstrates the role of modern African entrepreneurs in the development process. African entrepreneurship has been down-played in many African countries for some time because indigenous
entrepreneurs were presumed to be scarce, whilst at the same time foreign entrepreneurs were not trusted. The widespread belief was that entrepreneurship flourished in the Western world but not in Africa. However the Paper finds that entrepreneurship is ‘alive’ and well in Africa and has flourished where there has been both supportive policies and even hostile environments.

The author points out the importance of entrepreneurship in Africa, ie it creates employment for jobless people. He also stresses that successful enterprises have expanded from informal to formal enterprises as their owners have acquired experience and accumulated capital. However the author criticises the informal sector for its on-the-job training. It is pointed out that training is repetitive and does not take cognisance of issues concerning both the obsolescence, and, conversely, the increasing sophistication of machines.

Of major importance is that the author points out that although the governments generally did not encourage foreign entrepreneurs into Africa, these entrepreneurs have not blocked local entrepreneurship. Moreover, foreign entrepreneurs have benefited indigenous entrepreneurs by imparting to them their technical skills of running enterprises.

Perhaps the other factor worth mentioning is the shortage of funds available to African entrepreneurs. African enterprises are said to be retarded by inadequate access to bank credits, and high rates of interest imposed by banks which also limits the number of borrowers.

The second section deals with the findings of the interviews carried out. Thirty-six entrepreneurs in six countries were interviewed, the majority of which were selected from a list of people who received assistance from the Africa Project Development Facility (APDF), an institution founded in 1986 on the initiation of the International Finance Corporation. APDF provides advisory services to private entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa, including assistance in preparing market, technical and other feasibility studies.

Some interviewees were suggested by financial institutions and other contacts in the field. The criteria were African nationality, a track record of performance and coverage of a range of activities.

The author presents the interviewees’ appreciation of the assistance they receive from the APDF in spite of the limited funds it offers. Commercial banks were found not to be willing to assist if the individual had no collateral. Female entrepreneurs have been severely affected by this, such that one had to have her truck (obtained with an end-of-service gratuity from the Ghanaian army) used as collateral in order to solicit funds from the Agricultural Development Bank. She then purchased a second-hand wooden fishing boat which gave her the opportunity to break eventually into the market for canned tuna fish. A few interviewees
claimed to have links with foreign partners and financial institutions. Assistance from governments as acknowledged by the author is said to be limited. However, some entrepreneurs started their enterprises from their own savings whilst some inherited them.

A particular strength of this section is highlighting the contributory factors to the successes of the African entrepreneurs. Factors are said to be personal characteristics such as social, educational backgrounds and age groups. It is also pointed out that entrepreneurs often tend to set up enterprises in fields they are familiar with. For instance some pursue similar businesses to those of previous employments. Large numbers of African entrepreneurs employ wage labour and run enterprises on modern lines.

Perhaps the other contributory factors to the success of the enterprises could be better understood if they were given as advice to future entrepreneurs. These include hard work, thrift, desire for self-improvement, shrewd business sense and undoubtedly entrepreneurial drive. The author, however, points out that the first few years are difficult as only a few things proceed according to plan. Perseverance and good management skills are therefore important. Finally, in cases of risk, the entrepreneurs should diversify their enterprises further.

In conclusion, the author deserves a pat on the shoulder for a well-researched study on entrepreneurs. However, the title "African entrepreneurs" is misleading, as one is bound to expect information about the whole of Africa, yet the study is only on sub-Saharan Africa. The author therefore should have been more specific. Despite this shortcoming the Discussion Paper fairly represents African situations as a whole. The information presented is clear and useful and is to be recommended.


"No family therapist - whether experienced practitioner, student, teacher, or supervisor – will want to miss Multigenerational Family Therapy. Anyone who has ever struggled to shift responses from content to the process of a family’s thinking will be delighted to have this method of inducing growth and and change illustrated and demystified. After setting forth the goals and assumptions that guide his therapeutic interventions, Freeman illustrates these with transcripts of actual sessions in the beginning, middle, and ending phases of therapy involving adult couples. The clear annotations of these cases not only shows the importance of including their parents, siblings, and other significant persons, but also demonstrates how this can be done effectively". Carolyn L Attneave, PhD, SciD, Professor Emeritus, University of Washington.
This summary in the Haworth Press announcement says it all. David Freeman, whilst focusing on multigenerational family therapy, uses family history to shed light on the present, and particularly the resources the family has for coping in the future. Whilst set in the North American context, the approach appears to have the theoretical principles which can straddle different cultures and contexts.

The author utilises the extended family and highlights its importance in supporting and influencing beliefs and value systems held by individuals, which are often carried over into family life, aspects which are of particular importance to those of us working in the African context.

He shows how individual family members bring their own histories from their families of origin to synthesise with the next generation in a process of dynamic interaction.

Freeman also demonstrates how events can be experienced and interpreted quite differently by individuals, dyads and groups, often leading to complex effects and beliefs in families. In this way he highlights the challenge for the therapist who must understand these different realities and yet facilitate a process of positive change which affects all concerned.

I found this book enthralling, practical, illuminating and challenging, and I can thoroughly recommend it to all those involved in working with families.

Reviewed by C Farrell, Director, CONNECT, Zimbabwe Institute of Systemic Therapy, Harare.


"Women are agents of change and not just victims and making investment in women a development priority will make a critical contribution to development", writes Janet Henshall Momsen, a senior lecturer in Geography at the University of Newcastle.

This book is one of a series on development and underdevelopment. In an effort to highlight the role and contributions of women in economic growth the writer illustrates by way of case-studies. The book establishes beyond doubt that women in the Third World do both productive and reproductive work. They work longer hours than men, yet they earn 10% of the world’s income and own 1% of the family property, produce almost half the world's population and yet there are fewer girls in schools.
There is a clear-cut division of labour by sex and according to the writer this is as a result of colonialism, sexual segregation, capitalism and modernisation, where the traditional economies have been overtaken by the modern sector. These traditional economic activities were (and still are) done by women, and consequently new and better-paid jobs go to men, yet the income so derived is not spent on the family.

Discontent is expressed in the book that the United Nations Third World Decade on Development has come to an end without having done anything to change the attitudes of institutionalised male dominance. Janet Henshall Momsen acknowledges that there is an awareness of the need to consider women when planning for development. She highlights approaches to women and development and suggests use of the integrated approach which is human-centred.

All societies have division of labour by sex, although this varies from country to country. There are gender roles within a household, but an integration of the women’s reproductive and productive work should be realised within the private sphere of the home and public spheres in order for people to appreciate women’s roles in development. Productivity has been equated with the cash economy, thereby ignoring women’s economic contributions. Women are involved in small-scale agriculture and marketing, whilst men migrate to towns where the majority are found in areas of high economic value, where they work as producers.

Over-emphasis is made on female marginalisation which is due to historical, cultural and ideological factors. However, the commonly cited attributes of female marginalisation are the physical weakness of women, women’s concentration on the periphery, that is on the informal sector-type jobs, the idea of making jobs feminine thereby according them a low status, e.g. nursing and teaching, economic inequality, that is occupational differentiation, and lack of fringe benefits and job security on work considered as women’s.

Students of social work and sociology would quest for more answers to this gender differentiation and the writer briefly discusses the theoretical explanations of division of labour by sex. She indicates that there is the Neo-Classical Economic Theory which maintains that workers are paid according to productivity. This theory emphasises the disadvantaged position of women, characterised by poor education, less physical strength, lack of training and high turn-over. This line of thought pre-supposes that differences can be ironed out by way of exposing women to education which is intended to improve them. It assumes that there is an equal access to employment, yet ignores gender-based segregation prevalent in most societies.

The writer also discusses the Labour Market Theory which assumes that the labour market is institutionally controlled through formal and informal types of employment. As a result women are seen to be more in the informal sector due in part to their high turnover and unreliability.
The Feminist Theory, on the other hand, discusses the position of women in terms of social and cultural factors that restrict women’s access to the labour market: “A woman’s place is in the kitchen”. The argument is that the reproductive and productive roles of women are inseparable. It is only when men perceive women as equals that a balance can be realised. But while men expect women in employment to fall back on their gender-based social expectations, and continue treating women as sexual objects, then this still remains an issue.

Janet Henshall Momsen discusses and presents in the book ten case studies with personalised stories of women’s lives and how they have developed coping strategies in the context of the Third World. She has established that women are central to development; they control most of the non-money market economy through bearing and raising children; they provide labour for the household; provide maintenance and subsistence agriculture. They also contribute to both the formal and informal sector of the economy.

She concludes the book by challenging policy makers by calling for increased opportunities for women so that they can become economically independent.

I recommend the book to students of social work for it would give them an insight into some of the problems that society today faces, and gender differentiation is just but one of them. The book is very informative, educative, interesting and attempts to clarify some of the myths that arise because of women’s issues; perhaps the question remains as to whether there should be positive discrimination so as to accord women an equal status. Definitely the problem cannot be isolated to the Third World. It is a global issue and therefore needs a united (global) confrontation.

Reviewed by Agatha Tsitsi Dodo, National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), Harare.


Sandbrook raises the most perplexing and unsettled question of concern to the student of African politics: which is the appropriate development strategy for Africa? Since independence, there has been no agreement on a suitable model of development, hence two predominant ideologies of development were adopted: state-capitalism and (African) socialism. The issue of appropriate development strategy is particularly important because of the current economic crisis in Africa and the need for a model that would overcome the crisis to promote sustainable development. Sandbrook’s work is a vivid portrayal of economic hardship in sub-Saharan Africa.
The book contains data for comparative analysis of Africa’s economic performance and illustrates that very few countries have been successful while the majority have had dismal records. Sandbrook outlines the link between economic stagnation and state decay. Chapter 2 highlights the failure of both state-capitalist and socialist-oriented models of development adopted in sub-Saharan Africa. His explanation for the failure of both strategies centres on both lack of political will of leaders, and lack of state abilities for initiation and execution of development programmes. He tackles the controversial structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), stating their merits and demerits as well as their flawed or faulty assumptions. He correctly points out that SAPs have not had the intended impact. Citing cases to back-up his arguments, he concludes that overall, SAPs have neither improved the socioeconomic conditions of the poor majority, nor increased production and foreign investment.

More important and illuminating is his valuable assessment of the current strategy of development based on the free market economy and democratisation favoured by the international donor community and embraced by African governments. He dispels the notion that the free market economy and democracy are ‘twin panaceas’ of Africa’s economic and political ills as promoted by such institutions as the World Bank, and cautions the high expectations of African leaders and the people as to the results of such a model of development.

Sandbrook convincingly illustrates that in the short-run the current strategy would help revitalise African economies. However, he is sceptical of its long-run utility. He recommends an alternative strategy called the transformational approach for long-term and viable development. He is critical of the World Bank’s inadequate consideration of the global economy’s restraints on African development prospects because of its emphasis on domestic hindrances. He emphasises the negative consequences of external dependency on African economies. Therefore, he echoes the radical writings of dependency theorists like Gunder Frank in assigning the prime role to world market forces to explain under-development and the need for re-orientation of Third World economies as well as self-reliance. Sandbrook, however, discusses internal constraints on African development and illustrates inter-relationship between external and internal factors as deterrents on African development. Moreover, he acknowledges that the transformational approach (based on self-reliance, state intervention, mass participation and promotion of people’s basic needs), though an alternative to the market economy approach, has not been a success in the past, both at national and regional levels. Therefore, he is cautious of its implementation in the future.

He also takes to task the other assumptions of the free market economy and democratisation strategy of development: the limited role assigned to the state
which he considers faulty because historical experience elsewhere (eg 19th Century Europe – Russia) shows the need for an active developmental state to spearhead economic development. Africa, being underdeveloped, needs an ‘interventionist’ state, not only to initiate productive investment and create a conducive economic environment for prospective investors, but also to provide economic goods to the disadvantaged majority for improved human welfare. He challenges the assumption that democratisation is a sufficient condition for equitable distribution of the fruits of economic liberalisation. He is not at all sure that conditions in Africa are conducive to the sustenance of liberal democracy. He, therefore, brings up the popular concern of whether or not democracy and political stability are feasible in view of the economic hardships experienced by the majority of Africans.

It makes stimulating and easy reading. It is a useful analysis of major problems affecting African development and keeps alive the debate about Africa’s development prospects. It is a must for academics, especially for college and university students of African and International Politics, international aid institutions and political leaders alike.

Reviewed by Prof Kwaku Osei-Hwedie, Senior Lecturer, Department of Political and Administrative Studies University of Botswana, Gaborone.


“A revelatory new book, Marriage and Family Therapy is important reading for therapists working with clients of varied social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Drawn upon concepts from sociology and techniques from psychology, this book is the result of the extensive work of the late Dr Nathan Hurvitz. It is rich with transcripts and case examples, culled from the authors’ more than 35 years of practice, providing valuable background information on difficult-to-reach populations. The result, a humanist approach to family problems, as detailed in Marriage and Family Therapy, enables the therapist to cross social, cultural and racial boundaries to work effectively with and make an impact on families whose social characteristics differ greatly from his or her own” (The Haworth Press).

I unreservedly agree with the press release statement because I found reading this book very pleasurable and refreshing. It is very practical and the clinician is
taken step-by-step through the sociocognitive approach to handling cases. Because it holds a systemic view to therapy, family therapists will find this book very useful. The relabelling of personal problems, not as psychopathology, but as personal limitations, helps the therapist to see the client in a positive light from the beginning.

Dr Hurvitz’s crisis management techniques are very practical and also the incorporation of contracts between family members is a very useful technique which many clinicians will find very valuable if they incorporate this in their work with clients, whether in crisis or not.

I would recommend the book to all clinicians who work with individuals and families whether they be family therapists, social workers or psychologists.

Reviewed by E Muzenda, Training and Clinical Director, CONNECT (Zimbabwe Institute of Systemic Therapy), Harare.


Ruth Middleman and Gale Goldberg Wood have produced a book that has given me hope in my aspiration to be the best lecturer that I can possibly become. In this book, both authors have articulated various ways of being a creative teacher. The way they have presented and discussed the relationship between the “secrets” of practice and the use of self is excellent. This is the book that is a must for teachers of social work and I will have no hesitation to recommend that the School of Social Work should obtain a copy for each of its staff. If all lecturers read this book, they would be stimulated to become more creative in their teaching methods.

Middleman and Goldberg Wood have done an excellent job in editing various chapters of the book and making them read congruently. My favourite chapters in the book are: “Helping Students Learn from Each Other”, and “Standing for Values and Ethical Action: Teaching Social Work Ethics”. In fact, all the chapters written by various academics are excellent and one finds it hard to pinpoint the weaknesses of this book.

This book has left me with a renewed sense of excitement that it is possible for one to become a creative and excellent teacher without having gone through a Faculty of Education. I highly recommend this book for all the lecturers who teach social work without having learnt “teaching methods” as taught at Teacher Training Colleges. Anybody who is interested in becoming an outstanding lecturer will find this book compelling and useful as a constant reference book.

Reviewed by Ruth H Kiire, Lecturer, School of Social Work, Harare.

Stephen Chao was sent to Africa in the early 1980s by the Commonwealth Secretariat to work in the fields of social development and international relations. His book is based on his field work experiences. It focuses on youth and social development, and the broad question of development aid.

The author raises an important argument pertaining to the determination of the criteria that guides the disbursal of foreign aid. The lack of participation of poor countries in this process results in the creation of aid policies which emphasise the establishment of uniform operational procedures which serve to justify and perpetuate the existence of the international technocratic missionary that manages development assistance. The author’s argument that political leaders in peripheral nations are powerless to oppose the North’s economic paternalism is superficial. Many Western-educated political and bureaucratic elites in Africa perceive metropolitan countries as a reference society. Hence, even local development initiatives are inspired by Western values and concepts of development.

The book perceives the minimalist basic needs strategy which was articulated by the World Employment Conference in 1976 as a form of debilitating welfare imperialism. It has dismally failed to produce significant changes in the lives of the dispossessed. The author also notes that the super-imposition of small-scale industries on developing countries should be discouraged as it effectively reinforces patterns of international power and dependency.

Chan’s discussion on the impact of foreign aid on the South is handicapped by a lack of penetrating class analysis. In effect, some of his views reverberate the sentiments expressed by Africa’s lumpen bourgeoisie who simply define their countries’ economic predicament in terms of the North’s political and economic manipulation. The process of internal colonisation in Africa has permanently subordinated the have-little to the have-plenty, oppressed tribes to dominant ones, women to men, white Africans to black-skinned Africans, and rural communities to urban and regional centres.

The ruling elites in Africa have derived disproportionate benefit from foreign aid. They have also contributed to the postponement and termination of foreign-aided projects through bad policy and bad government. Sambona (1993) contends that their lack of discipline is inspired by the metropolitan elites. He defines foreign aid as “...transfers from rich countries by their corrupt political elites to the equally corrupt counterparts in the poor countries”.

Some of Chan’s proposals would be perceived by radical scholars as simplistic and paternalistic. His recommendation that industrialised countries should adopt aid policies that will boost developing countries’ development efforts presupposes that foreign aid is inspired by the North’s benevolence. This downplays the fact that donor countries derive economic advantage from aid programs. Rempel (1992) also shows how foreign aid bankrupts Africa. Thus no amount of hand-outs will eke out Africa from calamitous poverty and under-development.

As the competition for world resources gets tougher and tougher, African countries should become more self-critical, assertive and ambitious. They should forge strong regional and continental links that will enhance their bargaining power and increase their right to self-determination.

The author makes no recommendation for the radical restructuring of power relations within African states. It should be accepted that even if the volume of aid for Africa can be increased it will not empower grossly deprived masses because of growing structural inequalities. New measures should be adopted to create effective democratic institutions in Africa. The process of cultural imperialism should also be reversed so that development policies can become more sensitive to the needs of the marginalised majority.

In Chapter Five Chan criticises the clinical hegemony of the individual service approach. He maintains that the phenomenal growth of youth unemployment in Africa will render this approach ineffectual. The youth are desperately in need of resources, services and opportunities. He proposes the introduction of social work education and practice which are informed by sociological and economic disciplines, rather than psychoanalytic ones. Although his recommendation finds support in the writings of several African scholars it overshadows the fact that casework can be radicalised. Once the unempowered are equipped with critical and reflexive consciousness they will confront their oppressive situations individually and collectively (Paulo Freire, 1972).

The author’s argument that Western-based social work approaches are inappropriate to the African context shrouds the fact that these methods have also failed to upgrade the status of the poor in developed societies. Social work in Africa, as in developed societies, was not created to play a proactive role in the process of social and economic development, but to respond to social pathologies generated by the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation. The major achille’s heel of Chan’s work is that it fails to situate the failures of this profession within the dominant capitalist ideology that is operating in Africa. Conservative social work and other helping professions cannot be transformed if the hegemonic ideology which informs national development planning is not challenged and changed. An analysis that casts the net wide might inspire social workers to network with other
human services professionals, political parties and pressure groups which seek to mobilise resources for the African peasantry and unemployed youth.

It is not clear what Chan means by African social work. Development policies in Africa are over-dominated by the modernisation thesis, which is encouraging westernisation. The issues and problems that social work seeks to confront are generated within a political economy which has contributed to the dislocation of traditional institutions of welfare and support. As well, social work educators, students and practitioners in Africa and other peripheral nations are informed by conceptions of social work that were developed in the North.

This author has missed out another important point which any radical writer cannot overlook. This relates to class conflicts that exist between social workers and their clientele. Social work professionals support ideological commitments which are oppressive against the youth from marginal classes and subcultures. The poor and their radical advocates should pressurise social workers to reorientate their philosophic orientation so that their profession can become accountable to their constituency. Social work intervention can only be effective if the poor are given more power to determine and run programme services.

The rest of the book discusses the problems that effect the implementation of youth development. Although this book covers some pertinent issues that affect social and economic development in Africa, some of its arguments and proposals are rather limited and outdated. The work of Fraser Taylor and Fiona Mackenzie (1992) provides a penetrating analysis of Africa’s current crisis, and reveals how the ordinary people are struggling to survive.

References


Reviewed by Logong Radithlhokwa, Department of Social Work, University of Botswana, Gaborone.