

INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports a comparative study of the teaching of management accounting at the undergraduate level in a US-based business school and a business faculty in a Nigerian university. The purpose is to highlight similarities and differences in the designing and teaching of management accounting, with a view to influencing improvements in the system of transmitting management accounting education. The study yields data on seven different cost and management accounting courses taught at different levels of study at the two institutions. Analysis of the curricula on a number of dimensions reveals some similarities in content and pedagogy. However, substantial differences are noted in terms of coverage of contemporary issues; the extent of use of information technology, case methods and team projects; and the partitioning of the curricula to facilitate students' learning. The

management accounting curricula in the institutions may require some improvement; some approaches are suggested in this study.

INTRODUCTION

The stiffer competition experienced by firms as a corollary of globalization, has imposed on them a greater need for resource management efficiency. Management accounting is a critical factor in the drive for the efficient use of resources to maintain competitiveness in the dynamic and competitive global environment (IFAC, 1998). Management accounting performs the crucial role of providing information to enable effective planning, controlling and decision making. Management accounting education should therefore adequately prepare recipients for the fullest appreciation of this crucial role in organizations. It is important that those who will manage organizations in the current global environment should be equipped with appropriate management accounting education, as their actions and decisions are going to be driven by their level of knowledge.

Thein (2006) however, notes that management accounting as a course is often regarded as one of the toughest subjects, for students in business schools. The authors' teaching experience also buttresses this point, revealing that the pass rates recorded in many management accounting examinations are often lower than in other business and accounting courses. This trend seems to suggest that students are not effectively learning management accounting to be able to add value to the organizations where they would be engaged.

Thein (2006) offers a number of reasons for this “toughness”, which include among others too tight curriculum and non-motivating pedagogy. Richardson (2003) also argues that in many universities, professors offer the same subject using the same pedagogy as they have for the past twenty years, without further thought to their relevance in the contemporary business climate.

Approaches have therefore been suggested for revamping management accounting curriculum. Burns’ (1968) earlier suggestion of an approach to developing or revamping an accounting course is to review what has been done in similar courses at either one’s own institution or other universities. Palmer (as cited in Hanno, 1999) also argues that continuing thoughtful discussions about teaching should promote an environment where good teaching can flourish. Unfortunately he observes, this is absent in many environment, as faculty often labours in a private world of teaching. It is necessary that those delivering knowledge be exposed to different ways of teaching students. Knowing what takes place in other parts of the world may help in improving systems of educating management accounting students.

The objective of this study therefore, is to review the frameworks for organizing the teaching of management accounting in two schools from unique environments, where the authors have had experiences in designing and teaching management accounting at different levels of students’ education. The study examines and documents noteworthy similarities and differences in the extent of coverage of relevant issues, the mode of partitioning management accounting courses and the teaching methods in the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Lagos (FBA, Unilag), Nigeria and in the Jesse H. Jones School of

Business (JHJ), Texas Southern University, USA. The key questions guiding the study are as follows: Are the management accounting curricula in these schools relevant to the competitive global business climate? Is the partitioning of the curricula done in a way that will facilitate students' learning? Is the pedagogy adopted able to facilitate students learning and acquisition of the appropriate level of knowledge? In its contribution, the paper aims at suggesting ways that the findings may be used as a basis for either improving the systems or influencing what takes place in other systems to the benefit of accounting education. The findings are also aimed at assisting faculty who might be considering teaching management accounting in environments different from their domicile to determine the level of skills required of them.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING EDUCATION

Management accounting concepts have been traced back to the integrated cotton textile factories as early as 1815 (Johnson and Kaplan, 1987). The teaching of management accounting in management education however, appears to have gotten off the ground only in the late 1940s, perhaps taking off from the work of W. J. Valter at the University of Chicago and later embraced at Harvard University and at *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (MIT) (Maher, 2000). This is understandable as business management education itself, as a program in the university, is reported to have started in the United States of America at MIT in 1931. The second program, dating back to 1943, was at Harvard (Maher, 2000).

Management accounting education comprises disciplines concerned with the provision of information for internal use as against the external reporting focus of financial accounting. Although, management accounting education is often divided into cost accounting and management accounting, the distinction is not clear-cut in many curricula and textbooks. Topics discussed in cost accounting textbooks and syllabi also often appear in management accounting textbooks and syllabi. While some management accounting educators treat cost accounting as a precursor to management accounting, playing the same role that intermediate accounting does to financial accounting, others treat cost accounting as quite different from management accounting (Maher, 2000).

Anthony (1989) noting a difference in focus between early cost accounting courses and textbooks and management accounting suggests that cost accounting courses and textbooks were focused on procedural issues, while management accounting concentrated on management and behavioural issues. Much of early textbooks on management accounting were devoted to cost accounting with a concern for procedural issues such as product costing and inventory valuation. Maher (2000) suggests that the foundation of many management accounting courses and textbooks was provided by Robert Anthony's (1956) management accounting textbook. The book used cases instead of problems and provided a three way classification of cost concepts – full costs, differential costs, and responsibility costs thus directing attention towards production of cost information for decision making. Management accounting began to pay more attention to decision making and less to product costing and inventory valuation in conventional cost accounting. By 1960s, mathematical modelings, including applications of operations research to accounting, were

introduced into management accounting. As a follow-up to the criticisms of management accounting, started off by Kaplan (1984), many new topics like activity-based costing (ABC), economic value-added (EVA), balanced scorecard (BSC), lifecycle budgeting, strategic profitability analysis, throughput accounting/theory of constraints (TOC) and target costing were added to the management accounting curriculum.

Researchers have noted that at the onset, accounting curriculum models have placed heavier emphasis on financial accounting and little emphasis on management accounting. Maher (2000) notes that, the emphasis on financial accounting in the accounting curriculum about twenty years ago was about 70% to 80%, with only 20% to 30% emphasis on management accounting. He, however, concludes that students of accounting and other business students are today exposed to more management accounting than they were then with a common model giving a 50-50 allocation to management and financial accounting. Management accounting educators have also decreased emphasis on cost accounting, in accordance with the reduced need for accumulating and ordering data in companies, while increasing their emphasis on cost management and management accounting.

Management accounting for effective teaching and learning purposes is often partitioned into two or more courses, taught as core courses for accounting students as well as an introductory course for all business students in many business schools.

**Management Accounting Education in the Faculty of Business
Administration, University of Lagos, Nigeria**

Nigeria, a Federal Republic is located on the West Coast of Africa with 36 states and a recorded population of over 120 million people, out of which an estimated 30 million are students (Embassy of the United States, 2009). The language of instruction in Nigerian institutions is English. Accounting education in Nigeria is undertaken in tertiary institutions of learning including universities and polytechnics as well as in professional training institutions. All applicants seeking undergraduate admission into a Nigerian university are required to pass the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) with at least a Credit level pass in English and four other courses relevant to their major.

A candidate applying for admission to study Accounting will be required to have a minimum of a Credit pass in Mathematics, English, Economics and two other subjects of the SSCE. The candidate is also required to pass the Universities Matriculation Examination (UME) conducted by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), the body empowered to conduct Matriculation Examinations for entry into all degree awarding institutions in Nigeria. The candidate must register for English Language, Mathematics, Economics and one other subject relevant to accounting (JAMB Brochure, 2008).

Business School education began in Nigeria with the recommendation of the Ashby Commission on “Post-School Certificate and Higher Education” appointed by the Federal Government in 1959. The Commission recommended, among other things, the establishment of a University in Lagos, which would give special emphasis to “School of Commerce and Business Administration”. It was recognized that Lagos, as the then

political and business capital of the Federation, would be an ideal site for an institution of higher learning geared towards producing managers, accountants and administrators for the private as well as the public sectors of the economy.

The University of Lagos began in October 1962, with the establishment of the Faculty of Business and Social Studies, the Faculty of Law and the Medical School (then an independent unit which later became the College of Medicine of the University). Between October 1962 and August 1970, the Faculty took shape with substantial aid, in terms of personnel and physical resources, from the United States of America Industrial Development and from New York University (NYU). The NYU – University of Lagos Project, was responsible for the establishment and development of the Faculty of Business Administration. In 1967, the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences was split into two schools, i.e., School of Administration and School of Social Studies. Effective October 1973, the School of Administration was renamed the Faculty of Business Administration while the School of Social Studies became the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Currently, the Faculty of Business Administration with a Student enrollment of 2,791 (undergraduates) and 1,000 (post graduates) in the 2007/2008 academic year offers courses leading to Degrees of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Accounting; Actuarial Science; Business Administration; Finance; Insurance; and Industrial Relations and Personnel Management. The programme of Master of Business Administration (MBA), designed especially to meet the requirements of Nigerian Business Executives, commenced from the 1973/74 Session. This programme is currently run on a day (full time) – and evening (part time) - basis. In

addition, the Faculty offers Postgraduate courses leading to the M.Sc., M.Phil, and Ph.D. degrees in various business disciplines.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes leading to the various degrees in accounting are offered in the Department of Accounting, which took off in 1962, the same year the University was established. A higher emphasis is on the undergraduate programme with students' enrolment increasing steadily, from the initial figure of about 50 at inception to about 800 in 2008 (Faculty of Business Administration, 2008).

The undergraduate accounting programme leading to a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in accounting is a four-year programme in which students are required to take core accounting courses along with courses in law, management, finance, economics and general studies. The core accounting courses available numbering about eighteen are as follows: Introduction to Financial Accounting (ACC110); Introduction to Cost Accounting (ACC120); Principle of Accounting (ACC210); Elements of Cost Accounting (ACC220); Advanced Cost Accounting (ACC310) (Prerequisite ACC220); Financial Accounting (ACC311) (Prerequisite ACC210); Taxation I (ACC312); Management Accounting I (ACC320); Accounting Theory (ACC321); Principles of Auditing (ACC322); Research Methodology in Accounting (ACC323); Management Accounting II (ACC410); Advanced Financial Accounting I (ACC411); Public Sector Accounting (ACC412); Auditing and Investigations (ACC420); Management Information Systems and Computer Application (ACC421); Taxation II (ACC422) and Advanced Financial Accounting II (ACC423).

Included among these eighteen core accounting courses are five cost and management accounting courses. These are: Introduction to Cost Accounting (ACC120), recently introduced into the curriculum to enable accounting students cover enough introductory topics in cost accounting as the class usually never has enough time to thoroughly examine the numerous topics included in ACC220; Elements of Cost Accounting (ACC220) is offered to accounting students as well as other business students at the 200 level (second year). The course is designed to expose all business students to a wide range of traditional topics in cost accounting such as: cost concepts, cost classification, material, labor, and overhead costing, job-order costing, marginal and absorption costing; Advanced Cost Accounting (ACC310 - Prerequisite ACC220), offered to only accounting majors at the 300 level in the first semester deals with in depth coverage of topics in ACC220 and it also includes treatment of other topics such as process costing and (Activity Based Costing) ABC; Management Accounting I (ACC320 - Prerequisite ACC220), offered to only accounting students at the 300 level in the second semester introduces additional topics such as budgeting; and Management Accounting II (ACC410), offered by only accounting students in the final year of study. (These management accounting courses at the 300 and 400 levels are however available to students of finance as elective courses).

The management accounting curriculum model adopted in this school thus organizes management accounting teaching in five partitions spreading through the first to the final year of study. The students are taken through these courses using recommended textbooks by Nigerian and foreign authors. One of the major recommended textbook is authored by Omolehinwa (2002).

Management Accounting Education at the Jesse H. Jones School of Business, Texas Southern University, USA

The Texas Southern University is a historically black college (HBCU) located in Houston, Texas. The teaching and research intensive institution of higher education has an enrollment of more than 10,800 students and 900 faculty and staff. The university was established in 1947 with management education introduced at inception. The program was originally organized as the Department of Business Administration within the College of Arts and Sciences. As a result of steady increase in enrollment, due to accelerating economic growth, the program was expanded and the Department was elevated to a Division status. During the 1954-1955 academic year, approximately 400 students, 20 percent of the enrollment of the College of Arts and Sciences were pursuing degrees in the Division of Business.

The University soon recognized that the community's response to its thrust in business education required a separate faculty and its own dean. This decision resulted in the establishment of the School of Business in 1955, the Jesse H. Jones School of Business (JHJ). The school is the first HBCU business school to receive accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International). The primary emphasis of the JHJ School of Business is on the undergraduate program. JHJ currently offers a bachelor of business administration (BBA) in Accounting, Marketing, Finance, and Management. A master of business administration (MBA) program—including an MBA/JD—is, however, also available.

Admissions requirements to the undergraduate accounting program at the Texas Southern University are as follows:

“(1) gain admission to the University (2) fulfill prerequisite requirements for a major or minor in General Business (3) satisfy TASP requirements through the General University Academic Center (or GUAC) and (4) apply for admission to the Department as either a General Business major or minor. (<http://www.tsu.edu/pages/576.asp>).

The university provides equal educational opportunity to all graduates of accredited high schools in the United States and foreign countries and mature adults who have successfully passed the GED examination. The University has an open admissions policy. However, all entrants must meet the Texas Success Initiative requirements outlined below and be able to demonstrate their ability to perform successfully at the college level. The American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is recommended. These test scores are used for evaluation purposes. Each new student is required to take the ASSET or THEA test prior to enrolling at Texas Southern University. This test determines foundation course selections at the time of registration.

(http://em.tsu.edu/catalog/07catalog/12_admissions.pdf).

The bachelor of business administration degree in Accounting is offered through the Department of Accounting and Finance, which also offers a BBA in Finance. No graduate level degrees are offered through this unit. Courses in Accounting, Finance, Information Systems, Insurance, and Business Law at the undergraduate level are offered through the Department of Accounting and Finance. The Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting is a 132 semester hour program designed as the core

set of requirements for the study of business and accounting established by the AACSB.

The Public Accountancy Act of 1991 (as amended) regarding the requirements to sit for the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Examination requires that a candidate for the CPA Examination, after September 1, 1997, must have completed 150 semester credit hours before applying to sit for the CPA Examination. JHJ's Department of Accounting offers courses that allow students to meet the requirements of the Certified Public Accounting Examination. All of the faculty members are CPAs. Most of them are active members of the Houston Chapter of the Texas Society of CPAs (HCTSCPA's).

The Accounting Courses offered by the department are: Principles of Accounting I (ACCT231); Principles of Accounting II (ACCT232); Accounting Information Systems (ACCT300) (Prerequisites: ACCT231 and ACCT232); Intermediate Accounting I (ACCT331) (Prerequisite: GPA of 2.50 or better in ACCT231); Intermediate Accounting II (ACCT332) (Prerequisite: ACCT331); Intermediate Accounting III (ACCT333) (Prerequisite: ACCT331); Federal Income Tax Accounting (ACCT334) (Prerequisite: GPA of 2.50 or better in ACCT231 and ACCT232); Cost Accounting (ACCT336) (Prerequisite: ACCT232); Business Law (ACCT339) (Prerequisite: BADM234); Ethics for Accountants (ACCT430) (Prerequisite: Senior standing); Advanced Accounting (ACCT431) (Prerequisite: ACCT332); Auditing (ACCT433) (Prerequisite: ACCT332); Federal Income Tax Accounting II (ACCT436) (Prerequisite: ACCT 334); Contemporary Topics in Accounting (ACCT445) and Business Internship (ACCT446) (Prerequisite: ACCT231).

Of these fifteen courses, thirteen are core accounting two of which are management accounting courses namely: Principles of Accounting II (ACCT232) and Cost Accounting (ACCT336). Principles of Accounting II is the introductory management accounting course required for all sophomore business school students. The course syllabi consist of the first fourteen chapters (with the exception of chapter four) of Brewer, Garrison and Noreen (2007). Cost Accounting (ACCT336) is the only management accounting course beyond the introductory level that is required by the accounting major.

METHOD

The study is based on data obtained from two selected business schools from unique environments, USA and Nigeria, where the authors have had learning experiences in designing and teaching management accounting at different levels of students' education. The US-based business School, JHJ School of Business at the Texas Southern University in Houston, is an AACB accredited school. The Nigerian business faculty, the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Lagos is one of the most sought after Faculties for undergraduate management studies in Nigeria; over 9,000 applicants with a UME score greater than 200 at the 2008 JAMB examination made the faculty their first choice of school (Omolehinwa, 2008).

Data were collected through an examination of the management accounting syllabi of the two schools in comparison with topics discussed in selected management accounting textbooks. Data on teaching methods were collected through participants' observation (authors' several years' experience in

teaching at the two schools) of the teaching of management accounting. A content analysis of the accounting curricula and a descriptive analysis of the data obtained from participant observation of the teaching methods, were undertaken to highlight the differences and similarities in the schools. Table 1 provides demographic data on the institutions examined.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Type of institution	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
	Public	Public
Total enrolment in business school/faculty as at 2007/2008	1545/43	2,791
Enrolment on the accounting programme	249	800
Size of accounting faculty	8 full-time and 2 part-time	14 full-time and 2 part-time
Accounting faculty's ties with the practicing profession	All faculties are members of the AICPA. Majority of the full-time faculty serve on HCTSCPA Committees	Majority of faculties are members of the ICAN, a few serve on ICAN committees. Majority attend ICAN conferences and MCPes

Types of accounting degree offered	<p>* 4 year Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Accounting</p> <p>* MBA with Accounting emphasis</p>	<p>* 4 year Bachelor degree</p> <p>* Master of Science in Accounting degree</p> <p>* MBA with Accounting emphasis</p> <p>* Ph.D. in Accounting</p>
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RESULTS

Data collected highlighting similarities and differences in the management accounting curriculum obtainable in the schools under study based on a variety of dimensions are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2: Comparison Of Undergraduate Management Accounting Curricula

CURRICULUM	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
Number of core accounting courses identified within the undergraduate accounting	13	18

CURRICULUM	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
curriculum		
Number of management accounting courses identified within the undergraduate accounting curricula	2	5
Percentage emphasis on management accounting in the curriculum	15%	28%
Types of management accounting courses identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Introductory management accounting * Cost accounting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Introductory cost accounting * Advanced Cost accounting * Introductory management accounting * Management accounting
Management accounting curriculum models	<p>Two semesters:</p> <p>A one-semester management accounting course (for all business students) ; and</p> <p>A one-semester cost</p>	<p>Five semesters:</p> <p>1. One semester Introductory cost accounting – for all accounting students.</p> <p>2. One semester Introductory cost</p>

CURRICULUM	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
	accounting course – for accounting major only.	accounting for all business students 3. One semester Advanced cost accounting – for accounting students (available to finance students as elective). 4. One semester Introductory management accounting – for accounting students (available to finance students as elective). 5. One semester – management accounting II – for accounting students (available to finance students as elective).
Course Sequencing:		
100Level (Freshmen)	-	One semester cost accounting for accounting students
200level (Sophomore)	One semester management accounting for all	One semester cost accounting for all business students

CURRICULUM	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
	business students	
300level (Penultimate)	One semester cost accounting for all business students	* One semester cost accounting for accounting major * One semester introductory management accounting for accounting major
400level	-	One semester management accounting for accounting major
Learning activities:		
Textbook	Use of recommended textbooks for teaching	Use of recommended textbooks and lecturers' notes for teaching
Cases and projects	Cases obtained from dedicated websites of textbooks	Emphasis on computations rather than cases and projects
Exercises from textbooks	Class exercises are taken in sequence from chapter to chapter in recommended texts	Exercises obtained by lecturers from different sources including recommended textbooks
Readings	Textbooks and articles from	Textbooks from Nigerian and foreign

CURRICULUM	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
	American authors	authors
Term papers	Used	Not emphasized
Students presentations	Used	Not emphasized
Internet assignments	Used	Not used
Computer assignments (non-internet)	Used	Not used
Collaborative learning (Group work)	Used	Not emphasized
Guest speakers	Not used	Not used
Style of teaching:		
Delivery method	Traditional chalk and talk, emphasis on delivery of lecture	Traditional chalk and talk, great emphasis on delivery of lecture
Use of information technology	Use of CDs provided by textbook authors and PowerPoint presentations	Not yet in use, however, information technology equipments have been recently acquired
Video	Not used	Not used

CURRICULUM	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
presentations		
Hours of classes	3 hours of lecture per week (13-14 week - semester)	3 hours of lecture per week (13 week - semester)
Course materials	Often provided by lecturer, placed on portals (e. g. Blackboard), library reservations	Students often referred to textbooks
Technique of examination	Final examinations- MCQs; mid semester quizzes, tests	Final examinations emphasis on computations, no MCQs; continuous assessment tests within semester,
Basis for grading:		
Attendance/ participation	-	-
Written assignments	10%	10% (variable)
Term papers	-	-
Tests and quizzes	60% (variable)	20% (variable)
Cases and problems	-	-
Student	-	-

CURRICULUM	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
presentations		
Final examinations	30% (variable)	70% (variable)

Table 3: Course Content Analysis

TOPICS	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
Topics included in the Cost and management accounting syllabi		
Traditional topics:		
Cost concepts	Yes	Yes
Analysis of cost behaviour	Yes	Yes
Costing methods:	Yes	Yes
Job order/batch costing	Yes	Yes
Process	Yes	Yes
Cost volume profit analysis	Yes	Yes

TOPICS	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
Marginal costing	Yes	Yes
Absorption costing	Yes	Yes
Overheads costing	Yes	Yes
Material costing	Yes	Yes
Job costing	Yes	Yes
Management accounting and the business environment	Yes	Yes
Job order costing	Yes	Yes
Cost behaviour	Yes	No
Cost volume profit analysis	Yes	Yes
Profit planning	Yes	Yes
Standard costing	Yes	Yes
Marginal costing for decision making	Yes	Yes
Budgeting	Yes	Yes
Capital budgeting	Yes	Yes
Analysis of financial statements	Yes	No

TOPICS	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
Importance of ethics in business	Yes	No
Responsibility accounting	Yes	Yes
Financial performance measures	Yes	Yes
Transfer pricing	Yes	Yes
Contemporary topics:		
Activity-based costing (ABC)	Yes	Yes
Balance scorecard (BSC)	Yes	No
Economic value added calculations (EVA)	Yes	No
Target costing	Yes	No
TOC/Throughput accounting	No	No
Back flush costing	Yes	No
Lifecycle costing	Yes	No
Strategic positioning and profitability analysis	No	No
Linear programming	No	Yes

TOPICS	US-BASED	NIGERIAN-BASED
Learning curve	No	Yes
Joint product costing	No	Yes

Table 4: Topics Taught In Different Partitions Within The Framework For Teaching Management Accounting

LEVELL OF STUDY	US-BASED	NIGERIAN
100 (Freshmen)	NIL	<p>ACC120 – Introduction to Cost Accounting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature and scope of cost accounting • Break-even analysis and cost-volume-profit relationship • Marginal costing and absorption costing • Material pricing • Quantitative models for materials

LEVELL OF STUDY	US-BASED	NIGERIAN
<p>200 (Sophomore)</p>	<p>ACCT232 – Managerial Accounting – for all business students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction, review of accounting equation • Analysis of statement of cash flows • Financial statement analysis • Introduction to managerial accounting • Job-order costing • Activity-based costing • Cost behavior • Cost-volume-profit analysis • Profit planning 	<p>ACC220 – Principles of Cost Accounting; All Business Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to cost accounting • Role of cost accounting in the business organization • Material costing-inventory models and valuation methods • Labor costing • Overhead allocation – traditional and ABC • Job costing • Cost behavior • Cost-volume-profit analysis • Marginal costing Vs absorption costing • Short term decision

LEVELL OF STUDY	US-BASED	NIGERIAN
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard costing • Flexible budgeting 	<p>making and relevant information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standard costing; material and labor variances
<p>300 (Penultimate)</p>	<p>ACCT 336 – Cost Accounting (Prerequisite: ACCT 232)</p> <p>Accounting techniques for planning, controlling, and product costing.</p>	<p>ACC310 – Advanced Cost Accounting – Accounting major (1st semester) (Prerequisite: ACC220)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth treatment of; <p>Inventory models</p> <p>Labor costing</p> <p>Overhead allocation – traditional and ABC</p> <p>Job costing</p> <p>Cost behavior</p> <p>Cost-volume-profit analysis</p> <p>Marginal costing Vs absorption costing</p> <p>Short term decision making and relevant information</p> <p>Information for control-</p>

LEVELL OF STUDY	US-BASED	NIGERIAN
		<p>standard costing and material and labor variances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process costing • Spoilage, rework and scrap • Cost allocation; joint products and by-products • Introduction to budgeting
		<p>ACC320 – Management Accounting I – Accounting major (2nd semester)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches to budgeting • Flexible budget variances • Capital budgeting, investment appraisal and cost analysis • Quantitative models for decision making

LEVELL OF STUDY	US-BASED	NIGERIAN
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity analysis
400 (Final)	NIL	<p>ACC410 – Management Accounting II –Accounting major</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making and relevant information • Management control systems and responsibility accounting • Decentralization issues, transfer pricing and introduction to multinational business

DISCUSSION

This study comprises a content analysis of the management accounting curricula in the two business schools. The study reveals the following noteworthy similarities in the management accounting curricula: the organization of the management accounting curricula is in two separate sets of courses; cost accounting course(s) and management accounting course(s). Similar traditional topics such as: cost concepts, overhead allocation, job costing, break-even analysis are covered in both sets, suggesting a high level of focus on management accounting methods/techniques. The traditional chalk and talk constitutes the basic method of delivery in the two schools and hours of classes are similar, with a 3-hour per week period allocated to each management accounting course in the relevant semester. The style of teaching is primarily about teaching students to make computations.

However, the study finds the following substantial differences: The management accounting syllabus at the JHJ School of Business has an expanded coverage of issues relevant to the contemporary business environment including topics such as; theory of constraints, measurement issues, ethical and fraud related issues. The management accounting syllabus in the Nigerian-based school on the other hand, has not featured much change. New topics relevant to contemporary business environment are yet to be incorporated in the syllabus except a cursory mention of such topics as ABC.

The teaching methods also reveal some differences: While technological resources have found some application in the

teaching of management accounting in the US-based school, Compact Discs are provided with books by publishers for illustrations; PowerPoint presentations have also found use. These are yet to be fully embraced in the Nigerian business faculty for teaching management accounting. Although, some PowerPoint presentations are encouraged, students are not yet being taught the application of technology to effective provision of management accounting information. Although, increased use of cases has been advocated by researchers to help students understand organizational issues that created a need for management accounting concepts and the prospects for their success or failure in solving organizational problems (Maher, 2000), the use of case method has not gained much popularity in management accounting teaching in the Nigerian-based school.

Recommended management accounting textbooks in the school focus more on computations and cases relevant to management accounting practice are yet to be documented. The recommended textbooks used for teaching management accounting in the US school include cases which are used for teaching purposes as discussions or assignments. The analysis of the technique of examination reveals a heavier emphasis on final examinations in the Nigerian business faculty, while in the US school the final examination often takes up less than 50% of the evaluation of students' performance.

Another noteworthy difference is in terms of the partitioning of the management accounting curricula into separate courses. Evidence obtained shows a partitioning of management accounting curriculum in the Nigerian faculty into five courses, giving the impression of a heavier emphasis on management accounting consistent in current trend in accounting education.

Five management accounting courses amounting to 28% of eighteen core accounting course offerings. Management accounting in the JHJ is partitioned into two courses, representing only 15% of the thirteen core accounting course offerings in the department.

Although, a greater emphasis in terms of number of courses is noted in the Nigerian business faculty, these results reveal that the institutions have not moved towards a 50-50 allocation of management accounting courses described as a common model by Maher (2000). However, in terms of exposure to management accounting topics, the non-accounting business major is exposed to more management accounting topics in the US-based school. The sequencing of the management accounting courses is also a source of difference; while the Nigerian business faculty offers cost accounting courses as prerequisite to management accounting courses, the US business school offers an introductory management accounting course as prerequisite to cost accounting course. The difference may however, be only in the nomenclature as management accounting topics taught to all business undergraduate students at this introductory level in the two schools have similar emphasis.

Differences are also found in the extent of ties with the practicing profession. The importance of maintaining close ties to the practicing profession by accounting faculty through formal programmes has been noted (Wade, Long & McGuire, 2006). The study finds little evidence of close ties with the practicing profession in the Nigerian business faculty. Although, majority of members of the faculty are members of one of the professional accountancy bodies in Nigeria (ICAN), ties with the institute is limited to attendance at professional annual conferences and

mandatory continuing educational programmes (MCEPs). A few faculties are however, members of committees of ICAN.

The performance of students at management accounting examinations in the two schools has remained a source of concern. In Fall 2002, the US school began requiring all students enrolled in managerial accounting to take a common final exam that contained multiple-choice questions only. During the intervening semesters from Fall 2002 to Fall 2008, the average score increased from 41% to 52% at the US school. An evaluation of the average scores of the Nigerian school revealed that the average score over the same period has ranged from about 42% to 46%. The fifth partition of the management accounting curriculum was introduced in the 2006/2007 academic session. It is expected that the inclusion of a management accounting course at the 100level will result in better performance of students at the higher level management accounting examinations. However, this expected effect is yet to be noted as the set of students that benefited from this partitioning are yet to take the higher level management accounting examination.

CONCLUSION

The current period of heightened competition in the world of business, demands more focus on management accounting in accounting education. Students need to acquire an appropriate level of skills that will enable them to cope with the more competitive global business environment. This period, thus, presents an opportunity to examine the organization of the management accounting curriculum to ensure that management accounting education is more effective. Constant reviews of the

management accounting curricula should assist graduates in adding value to their organizations.

This study reveals a need for improvement in the management accounting curricula in the schools examined. Curriculum needs to provide more extensive coverage of contemporary issues. In order to be able to effectively cover relevant issues, more attention may need to be focused on the issue of partitioning management accounting into coherent and logical courses. This study, in agreement with previous research (Brewer, 2000; Novin, Pearson & Senge, 1990; Tuitt, Frakes & Fertakis, 1983), notes that the partitioning of the management accounting course may be one of the major challenges facing educators. Partitioning of the curriculum into multiple courses, may be more helpful in ensuring adequate coverage and facilitating students' learning of the expanded scope of management accounting. Only one course beyond the introductory level may be inadequate in dealing in-depth with the issues that students need to learn.

However, while it is desirable to partition into more courses to create more emphasis on management accounting and on topics dealing with contemporary issues in line with current trend, a framework needs to be devised for arranging topics into a logical sequence. Redundancy in curriculum arising from a repetition of topics at multiple levels in the name of in-depth coverage needs to be brought to a minimum. An approach suggested in studies is a vertical integration of curriculum topics between the different partitions in a sequence to improve students learning (Chulkov & Desai, 2006; Martin, 1987).

The delivery method is also clearly important in the students' learning process, while the schools still use predominantly the chalk and talk method of delivery, recent

research has suggested that management accounting education needs to focus more on problem solving skills and organizational context of decisions. Greater use of case method may assist educators in this direction. Programmes for maintaining closer ties, for example, arranging visits to companies to observe their management accounting systems in operations and familiarize with challenges in the systems may produce information for class illustrations and discussions.

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