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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
KNUST SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
Department of Marketing
and Corporate Strategy

PROFESSORIAL INAUGURAL LECTURE

To be Delivered by

Professor Nathaniel Boso

BSc (Ghana), MSc (Umeå), PhD (Loughborough)

(An International Marketing and Strategy Professor at the
Department of Marketing and Corporate Strategy, KNUST and
The Centre Director for the Centre for Applied Research and
Innovation in Supply Chain-Africa (CARISCA))

Topic: "International
Business: Why Care
About Africa?"

Chairperson:

Professor (Mrs.) Rita Akosua
Dickson *Vice-Chancellor, KNUST*



Thursday,
18th April, 2024



4:30p.m.



Great Hall
KNUST

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Contents

PROGRAMME	01
PROFILE OF PROFESSOR NATHANIEL BOSO	02
BACKGROUND	02
EARLY LIFE	04
EDUCATION	04
ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE	05
EDITORIAL ROLES	06
MAJOR AWARDS	06
EXTERNAL FUNDING SUCCESSES	07
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION	08
TEACHING AND CONSULTING ACTIVITIES	08
MEMBERSHIP OF ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL BODIES	09
SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICAN FOCUSED INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH	09
ABSTRACT OF THE LECTURE	11
TOPIC: "INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: WHY CARE ABOUT AFRICA?"	11
UNIVERSITY ANTHEM	13
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC LECTURES COMMITTEE	15
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	16

Programme

Opening Prayer	Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Anthony F. Naah, <i>Catholic Chaplain, KNUST</i>
Significance of Inaugural Lectures	Mr. Andrews Kwasi Boateng, <i>Registrar</i>
Introduction of Chairperson	Professor Atinuke Olusola Adebajji, Chairperson, Public Lectures Committee
Musical Interlude	Agya Koo Nimo and Adadamu Agofomma
Introduction of Speaker	Professor (Mrs.) Rita Akosua Dickson, <i>Vice-Chancellor, KNUST</i>
Lecture	Professor Nathaniel Boso
Robing of Speaker	Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Chairperson, Public Lectures Committee
Musical Interlude	Agya Koo Nimo and Adadamu Agofomma
Closing Prayer	Rev. (Dr.) J. W. Acheampong, <i>Protestant Chaplain, KNUST</i>
University Anthem	Lift every voice and sing
Moderator	Mr. James Kwasi Oberko

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**Professor
Nathaniel Boso**

BSc (Ghana), MSc (Umeå),
PhD (Loughborough)

PROFILE OF PROFESSOR NATHANIEL BOSO

BSc (Ghana), MSc (Umeå), PhD(Loughborough)

**(An International Marketing and Strategy Professor at the
Department of Marketing and Corporate Strategy, KNUST and
The Centre Director for the Centre for Applied Research and
Innovation in Supply Chain-Africa (CARISCA))**

BACKGROUND

Nathaniel Boso is a Professor of International Marketing and Strategy and the O.R. Tambo Africa Research Chair at the Department of Marketing and Corporate Strategy, KNUST School of Business, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He served as the Dean of KNUST School of Business from 2017 to 2023. Since 2021, he has served as an Extraordinary Professor of International Business at University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science (South Africa) and a visiting Professor to Brock University (Canada), University of Leicester (UK) and Strathmore University (Kenya). Prior to joining KNUST, he was an Associate Professor of Marketing at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.

His research focuses on the interface between international entrepreneurship, industrial marketing and supply chain strategy that has won multiple international awards. Notably, in 2021 his article on "(How) Does Africa Matter for International Business Scholarship?" won the Academic International Business Insight Outstanding Article Award. He was also the winner of the 2019 S. Tamer Cavusgil Award from American Marketing Association Foundation, which recognizes the Journal of International Marketing article published in the calendar year that has made the most significant contribution to the advancement of the practice of international marketing management. His research also won the 2017 Global Innovation and Knowledge Academy Best Conference paper;

and the Best Empirical Paper Award at the 25th United States Association of Small Business & Entrepreneurship. He has published in high impact journals including Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of World Business, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Product Innovation Management, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of International Marketing, International Journal of Production Economics, Journal of Business Logistics and Journal of Business Research.

Professor Boso serves as the Consulting Editor (African Affairs) of the Journal of International Business Studies and an Associate Editor of International Marketing Review and Africa Journal of Management. He also serves as the Vice-President of Academy of International Business Africa Chapter from 2018 to 2023. He was appointed in 2021 to the prestigious O.R. Tambo Africa Research Chair Initiative with a budget of 14 Million South African Rand (USD 1.075 Million). He is also the principal investigator at KNUST on the USD 15 Million BRIDGE-Train project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Nathaniel has been a keynote speaker at several international academic gatherings including the Research and Innovation Strategy Group Dialogue of Universities South Africa, 6th International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (Zambia), Southern University Global MBA Leadership Forum (USA), and University of Pretoria (South Africa) Africa Leadership Forum.

He received his basic education from AME Zion School in Cape Coast, and secondary education from St. Augustine's College, also in Cape Coast, completing in 1994 before proceeding to Accra Teacher Training College from 1995 to 1998 for his post-secondary teacher certification. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Ghana in 2002, Master of Science degree in Industrial Marketing from Umeå University in Sweden in 2004 and Ph.D. in International Entrepreneurship and Industrial Marketing from Loughborough University in the United Kingdom in 2011. He is also a Chartered Marketer at the UK-based Chartered Institute of Marketing.

EARLY LIFE

Nathaniel Boso was born on 22nd November 1976 in Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana to Mr. Emmanuel Frank Boso and Madam Mercy Adwoa Adoshie. With his multi-ethnic background, Nathaniel grew up in different parts of Ghana and beyond. Although he lived in Cape Coast for most parts of his childhood life, he spent some years living in Penyi in the Volta Region of Ghana with his paternal grandfather and grandmother. He also spent some years living with his maternal grandmother at Yakoko near Nsawam in the Eastern Region of Ghana, and with his maternal grandfather at Akefe in Togo. Nathaniel also spent some years in Benin state in Nigeria in the 1980s working in his maternal grandfather's yam plantation. He is married to Dr. Patience Aku Bruce (a KNUST PhD Alumni) and is blessed with a daughter, Michelle Fafa Boso, and several adopted children.

EDUCATION

Professor Boso started his lower primary education at AME Zion Primary School in Cape Coast and continued to St. Anthony Primary school in Penyi in the Volta Region for his upper primary education. He returned to Cape Coast in 1990 for his Junior High School Education at AME Zion Junior High School before proceeding to St. Augustine's College, also in Cape Coast, for his Senior High School Education in 1992, graduating in 1994. At the time of his graduation from St. Augustine's College, universities in Ghana were on a yearlong strike. While waiting for universities to reopen, he took advantage of the year-long break to enrol on a teacher training programme at Accra College of Education, graduating with a post-secondary teacher education certificate in 1998. While working as a teacher at a village near Nsawam, he also enrolled at University of Ghana Business school to study for his bachelor's degree in business administration, which he completed in 2002.

Following completion of his national service in 2003, he took advantage of a Swedish Government scholarship opportunity to study for a Master of Science degree in Industrial Marketing at Umeå University in Sweden, which he completed in 2004. Three years later in 2007, he proceeded to Loughborough University

in the United Kingdom to study for his PhD degree in international marketing and entrepreneurship, completing in 2011.

Nathaniel also took professional courses in marketing, earning a Chartered Marketer status with the UK based Chartered Institute of Marketing in 2014.

ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Professor Boso has worked with several institutions in many countries, spanning over two decades. He has always believed in a famous statement made by Nelson Mandela that, "A leader... is like a shepherd. He or she stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realising that all along they are being directed from behind." Nelson Mandela. With this mindset, throughout his academic and administrative roles, he has committed himself to shepherd his colleagues by protecting, guiding, and watching over their career progress.

Having completed his teacher training education in 1998, he worked with Ghana Education Service as a junior high school teacher at Obosonu, a small farming community near Nsawam in Eastern Region from 1998 to 2001. Between 2002 and 2003, he joined Omanfofor Trading Company Limited in Accra as a Key Accounts Manager for his national service. After his master's education in Sweden, he travelled to the United Kingdom to work as a Senior Sales Consultant at MFI Company Limited, a furniture distribution company at Nottingham, from 2003 to 2006.

Whilst studying at Loughborough University for his PhD, he was recruited to the role of Research Associate in the same university in 2009, a position he occupied until his appointment as a lecturer at the University of Leeds in the UK in 2011. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2013 and Associate Professor in 2015 at the University of Leeds. In 2017, he joined KNUST as an Associate Professor in the Department of Marketing and Corporate Strategy. He was concurrently appointed Dean of the KNUST School of Business, a role he occupied until November 2023. In 2021, he was promoted to a Full Professor at KNUST. He is currently the Director for the Centre for Applied Research and Innovation in Supply Chains – Africa (CARISCA) at KNUST, a centre of excellence

that he co-founded with funding support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). He also serves as an Extraordinary Professor of International Business at University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science in South Africa, and a visiting international scholar to Brock University in Canada, University of Leicester in the UK, and Strathmore University in Kenya.

Nathaniel has also served on several boards. As the Dean of the KNUST School of Business, he served as Chairman of the School Board from 2017 to 2023. Between 2018 and 2023, he served as the Chairman of the Research and Publication Committee of the Academy of International Business, Africa Chapter, and Vice-president of the Chapter. Since 2019, he has been serving as a member of the Board West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and Council Member of Kessben University College.

EDITORIAL ROLES

Nathaniel has also provided multiple editorial services to some of the most prestigious academic journals. Since 2023, he has been serving as the Consulting Editor for Africa Affairs for the Journal of International Business Studies, premier scholarly journal for international business discipline. Since 2016, he has served as the associate editor of International Marketing Review, and since 2019, he has served as the associate editor of Africa Journal of Management and Journal of African Business. He has also served as editor of special issues on internationalization of African Businesses at the Journal of Business Research and Thunderbird International Business Review.

MAJOR AWARDS

Nathaniel has also won multiple awards. In 2023, he won the KNUST's research leadership award for his dedication to research excellence at the university. In 2021, he was the winner of the Academy of International Business Insight Outstanding Article Award with his article entitled "(How) Does Africa Matter for International Business Scholarship?". In 2019, he won the S. Tamer Cavusgil Award from American Marketing Association Foundation, which recognizes the Journal of International Marketing article published in the calendar year

that has made the most significant contribution to the advancement of the practice of international marketing management. In the same year of 2019, he was a finalist for the Hans B. Thorelli Award, which "honours an article that has made the most significant and long-term contribution to international marketing theory or practice." In 2017, he was the winner of Global Innovation & Knowledge Academy Conference Best Conference Paper. And a paper from his PhD thesis won the 2011 Best Empirical Paper Award at the 25th United States Association of Small Business & Entrepreneurship Annual Conference.

EXTERNAL FUNDING SUCCESSES

Professor Boso has won several international grants to fund his research and support several PhD and master students at University of Leeds and at KNUST. In 2021, he was one of the 10 African scholars to be awarded the O.R. Tambo Africa Research Chair with 14 Million South African Rand (US\$1.075 Million) funding. This award supports his research into technology entrepreneurship and employability in sub-Saharan Africa, allowing him to award full scholars to 18 PhD candidates and 35 master's students at KNUST. In 2020, he was awarded US\$300,000 Grant by the United States Embassy in Accra to train KNUST faculty in flexible learning as part of the University Partnership Initiative. In the same of 2020, Nathaniel and his colleagues at Arizona State University in the US were awarded US\$15 Million Grant by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to establish the CARISCA centre at KNUST. This award has enabled him to lead a team of international researchers to supervise 25 PhD students at KNUST, 17 of whom successfully graduated last month. The CARISCA centre, which he leads as a director has also provided full scholarships to more than 200 master's degree students at KNUST. Nathaniel also played a major role in the award of US\$ 6.5 Million Grant by the World Bank Group that funded the establishment of the TRECK centre at KNUST, where he serves as a thematic lead for sustainable and resilience logistics research. In 2018, he and his colleagues were awarded US\$ 162,000 grant by USAID to fund research into Africa's health supply chains. And in 2012, he was awarded 188,200 British Pounds Sterling by the Commonwealth Secretariat to fund a doctoral research place at University of Leeds.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION

Nathaniel has successfully supervised several PhD students in many countries and universities. As of 2024, he has successfully supervised and graduated 30 PhD students from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Leipzig (Germany), Strathmore University (Kenya) and University of Leeds (United Kingdom). Besides PhD students, he has graduated more than 100 MPhil and MBA/MSc students. At the University of Leeds, two of his female PhD students won the outstanding graduating students awards for the quality of their research. His Ph.D. graduates are currently holding academic positions in leading universities such as Universities of Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Leicester and Loughborough in the UK, and KNUST, University of Ghana, and several technical universities in Ghana. His other PhD graduates are currently holding high-profile industry (e.g., Cargill, Equity Bank in Kenya) and policy (e.g., Parliament of Ghana) positions. Some of his notable PhD students were Honourable Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson (current Minority Leader in Parliament), Dr. James Kofi Kutsoati (former Deputy Director of Ghana COCOBOD) and Lydia Kiburu (Group Director for Business Transformation, Brand & Culture, Equity Group Holdings Plc in Kenya).

TEACHING AND CONSULTING ACTIVITIES

Nathaniel has been involved in designing and teaching several Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses in Entrepreneurship and New Venture Management, International Business Management, Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management, and Advanced Quantitative Research Methods. Beyond lecturing, he has played mentorship and coaching roles for many student technology entrepreneurs with some of the student-started ventures winning international awards for the social impacts of their ventures (e.g., US\$25,000 award at Prototype for Humanity student competition in Dubai in November 2022). He has consulted for several international organizations including Intel Corporation and Dell Technologies, and national organizations such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana.

MEMBERSHIP OF ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL BODIES

He is currently an active member of, and/or have presented research papers at conferences organized by leading international academic bodies including American Marketing Association, Academy of International Business, Decision Science Institute and Academy of Marketing Science.

SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICAN FOCUSED INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH

Following his first landmark publication after his PhD, Professor Boso authored several other scholarly articles from his research using the African context as an empirical setting, with some winning international awards. It is important to highlight that his African context-specific research has been published in elite international high impact journals including Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of World Business, Journal of Product Innovation Management, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of International Marketing, International Journal of Production Economics, Journal of Business Logistics and Journal of Business Research. These journals are listed on the Financial Times top 50 journals and/or on the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) Journal Quality list. Note that journals listed on the financial times and the Journal Quality List are elite journals that are used to determine ranking of universities in the world. So far, Professor Boso has published four papers in this research area that are ranked 4 (i.e., internationally leading) on the Financial Times lists, 36 research articles in journals that are ranked 3 (internationally recognized) and another 19 that are classified as internationally acceptable on the CABS list. As of March 2024, his research has received 4,896 citations, h-index of 33 and i10-index of 50.

His research has also won multiple international awards for its excellence and impact. Notably, in 2021 his co-authored article on "(How) Does Africa Matter for International Business Scholarship?" won the Academic International Business (AIB) Insight Outstanding Article Award. This article made an insightful case for incorporating the African context to international business discourse as a way of broadening scholarly understanding of the complexity of the international

business phenomenon. His research on the experiential learning through export learning process and its export performance outcomes won the 2019 S. Tamer Cavusgil Award from American Marketing Association Foundation, which recognizes the Journal of International Marketing article published in the calendar year that has made the most significant contribution to the advancement of the practice of international marketing management. His first conference paper from his PhD thesis also won the Best Empirical Paper Award at the 25th United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship Annual Conference in 2012.

In addition to his academic articles, Professor Boso has focused on producing African context-specific industry briefs and reports (e.g., Ghana Logistics Managers' Index), practitioner articles (e.g., "Out of Africa" published in Supply Chain Management Review) as well as policy briefs. His goal has been to contribute to a decolonization of knowledge consumed by African business leaders and policy makers. Besides, he is also leading a team at the CARISCA Centre to start an African case study writing project that focuses on producing African context specific cases in entrepreneurship and supply chain management for teaching and learning purposes.

Abstract of the Lecture

TOPIC: "INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: WHY CARE ABOUT AFRICA?"

For many years, the voice of Africa scholarship in business and management research has been marginal and hardly taken seriously. The number of articles published in leading journals of international business and management over the last half a century on Africa is about a tenth the numbers on Latin America, the Middle East and China. The situation gets bleaker when one considers the number of scholarly works originating from African scholars located in African universities – one hardly sees a scholarly work published in an elite journal that is authored by researchers located in an African university.

But why should anyone care about Africa in international business scholarship? After all, nothing positive and groundbreaking gets written and published about African businesses. While some reports have captured Africa as a sleeping giant, others have portrayed the continent as a Lion on the move. Whatever the caption, Africa should receive more attention not only because of its size and the opportunities it offers, it requires more attention because it is unlike any and necessitates different perspectives and ways of thinking – for theory, policy, and practice. Much has been made of Africa being different – poorer than any, less institutionally developed, less stable politically and economically, most precarious healthcare condition, largely informal, and served by local businesses that are mainly small and first generational. These distinctive characteristics of Africa matter for business and business theory development: it represents a unique and an extreme case that is different from what is known elsewhere. Conditions in Africa occupy different theoretical space and are guided by different logics that challenge existing assumptions and theoretical relationships developed in more ordinary environments.

It is these differences that make Africa context specific research so enticing, and yet challenging to execute. The study of Africa requires fundamentally different approaches, new thinking, and new ways of communicating research findings. In this inaugural lecture, I argue why the African context provides a unique and an extreme empirical setting to enrich international business knowledge development. I further contend that the capacity of African scholars and researchers with interest in Africa to bring the African context to scholarly international business discourse requires academic research approach that is predicated on a commitment to research and innovation excellence. It also requires a strategy for funding high quality research and innovation activities in higher education institutions in Africa. I then use my experiences from my doctoral studies to my academic career spanning over 16 years to demonstrate how a commitment to and leadership in African context-specific research excellence can help advance scholarly knowledge in the international business discipline.

The lecture further delves into efforts made over the years to advance Africa context research in different higher education institutions on the continent. These efforts include establishments of centers of excellence and research chair to strengthen research capacity of African business and management researchers and students.

Finally, the lecture advances several policy recommendations as a way of pushing forward the frontiers of quality of African context research including recommendation to: 1) reorient the African economy and businesses to spur investments in knowledge-intensive products and services; 2) de-stigmatize failure to enhance risk-taking and innovation in the African society; 3) prioritize research quality in higher education institutions; 4) create truly autonomous research-intensive universities to lead groundbreaking African context research; and 5) create research and innovation foundations to fund major impactful research and reverse the tides of Africa's brain drain.

Keywords: *African context, academic research quality, funding for research, innovation, international business, international trade, scholarly outputs.*

University Anthem

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun
Of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won

Stony the road we trod
Bitter the chastening rod
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died
Yet with a steady beat
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears have been watered
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered
Out from the gloomy past
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast

God of our weary years
God of our silent tears
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path, we pray
Lest our feet stray from the places, Our God, where we met Thee
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee
Shadowed beneath Thy hand
May we forever stand
True to our GOD
True to our native land

Words by J. W. Johnson
Music by Rosamund Johnson

Members of the Public Lectures Committee

Professor Atinuke Olusola Adebajji	Chairperson
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Dr. George Kushiator	Member
Ms. Anita Akua Kyerewaa Kuma	Member
Mr. Isaac Marfo	Member/Secretary

Acknowledgements

- Textile and Fashion Unit of the Department of Industrial Art, KNUST for the Design and Production of the Special Academic Gown for the Speaker,
- University Relations Office for the Graphic Design works and Photography,
- TekTV of the Department of Communication Design, KNUST for the live streaming of the Lecture on the University's website and social media platforms,
- Department of Horticulture of the Faculty of Agriculture, KNUST for the provision of floral decoration at the Great Hall,
- Agya Koo Nimo and Adadamu Agofomma of the Centre for Cultural and African Studies (CeCAST), KNUST for the provision of musical and cultural performances, and
- Mr. Godfred Agbemador and Mr. Yirenkyi Daniel Awatey of the Department of Health Promotion and Disability Studies, KNUST for the provision of Sign Language Interpretation Services.

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