Education
Leadership and Crises in Nigerian Universities: Can Women Make a Difference?

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Caroline Okumdi Muoghalu who was born in Nigeria earned a Bachelor's in Anthropology and Sociology degree at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1994 and a Master's in Industrial Sociology degree from Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, also in Nigeria, in 2000. She obtained her Philosophy .Doctorate in Medical Sociology degree at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria in 2008. During her studies at Obafemi Awolowo University, she was a junior research fellow at the Center for Gender and Social Policy Studies between 2003 and 2009 (Recht-als-kultur, 2021).

Muoghalu also held a post-doctoral fellowship of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) from 2012 to 2013. During her fellowship year, she presented a thesis entitled "Leadership and Crises in Nigerian Universities; Can Women Make a Difference?: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and University of Ibadan as Case Studies." She took part in various national and international conferences such as "Population and Development: New Approaches to Enduring Social Problems" convened at Brown University in the United States; the "2nd International Conference on Cupping Therapy" held in Istanbul, Turkey, among others. She presently works as a medical sociologist in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Obafemi Awolowo University (Recht-als-kultur, 2021).

Book Review

Muoghalu's book aims to provide ideas that can help to reduce the marginalization of women in positions of power in higher education in Nigeria. She culls from the lessons of the impact some women in positions of power in other professions have made to explain the significant impact others can make in holding higher positions in Nigerian universities (Muoghalu, 2018).

The first chapter of the book discusses the marginalization of women in Nigerian universities' leadership positions. It also makes a correlation between the happenings in African universities where women do not constitute the majority in governing councils and other leadership positions as their male counterparts. Muoghalu is displeased with the ratio of women to men in leadership positions in university settings. She expresses the view that the leadership qualities of women are not really tapped. She argues that crises in universities can be conquered if women are allowed to take up leadership positions in the universities. She also cites examples of women in leadership positions who had smooth-running tenures (free of crises) during their leadership days (Muoghalu, 2018).

The second chapter places emphasis on the importance and impact of women in leadership

positions within the African context and globally. Relevant literature is reviewed to show the impact of these women leaders. The reasons why women are exempted from leadership roles are also discussed. The literature review shows that the number of women in leadership positions such as Head of Department, Dean of Faculty, and other principal roles is limited with little or no involvement. The review is not limited to the Nigerian or African context but also touches on other countries such as Canada, India, and the United States. The impact of organizations such as the Academic Staff University Union (ASUU) and others in increasing the number of women in university leadership are likewise discussed (Muoghalu, 2018).

The third chapter pinpoints the prevalence and causes of the crises as well as the government's role in the crises faced by Nigerian universities. Government activities such as increasing in petrol cost, changing institutions' names, increasing school fees, and underfunding are noted to have caused the crises in Nigerian universities (Muoghalu, 2018).

The fourth chapter is on gender, leadership and the status of universities. The focus here is on men and women leaders in the universities, the quality of women leadership in higher positions, and the constraints women encounter when aspiring for leadership positions in a university. Data were gathered from students and staff of the University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University to explain the constraints women encounter in getting leadership positions. Also, the data collected show that staff members at both universities support the leadership of women; while it is also revealed that men support women being in power than they do their counterparts (Muoghalu, 2018).

Book's Greatness

First, the book is great because it looks with keen interest and meticulously at the quality, attributes and charisma of women as attributes that should allow them to get the highest leadership positions in universities. It measures the strength of men and women in settling conflicts in the academy.

Second, the book pinpoints, using impeccable empirical date, that where women have taken up the highest leadership positions, there has been no rift, conflict, or strike within a university setting unlike when men are the heads. Therefore, the book points out reasons why women should be considered to be among the most effective decision makers of Nigeria's universities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the review of the selected book in the foregoing sections, it is evident that higher education systems in Africa still have a long way to go in order to reach the levels of their counterparts in other continents, especially in the area of research. Also, the curricula designed for higher education in Africa still favor the lessons of the former colonial masters and rarely feature current happenings in Africa.

Therefore, based on the findings, two recommendations are suggested. First, the curricula should be designed to factor in current happenings in African societies and be developed to involve indigenous knowledge so as to preserve African culture, heritage, values and norms. Also, scholarly work should be conducted on ways to improve research in African universities.

Second, higher education in Africa is underfunded, a situation that has limited its capacity to be involve in extensive research. Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should invest more in research in universities to bring about positive changes in society and,

most importantly, bring about much needed development in the continent.

References

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