

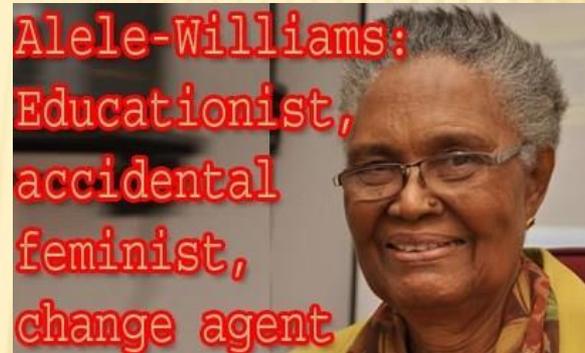
**ISSUES AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTING TERTIARY
INSTITUTION'S WOMEN LEADERS IN EDUCATION IN SOUTH
EASTERN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS.**

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TOPIC

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTING TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS WOMEN LEADERS IN EDUCATION IN SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS.



INTRODUCTION

- Tertiary institutions' education is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, Monotechnics including those institutions offering corresponding courses (NPE, 2004) ..
- Tertiary educational leadership positions are organs and offices whose functions facilitate policy formation, implementation and decision making processes on academic and administrative issues to ensure the smooth operation of the institution.
- Most policy making bodies in tertiary institutions seem to be occupied by men. This is evident in Most Nigeria's tertiary Institution governing council having few women as members.
- Be that as it may, there has been an increase in emphasis on giving qualified and competent women the opportunity to occupy management positions in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- The increased participation of Nigeria woman in leadership positions in different parastatals with particular reference to educational leadership have led to increased interest in the effects of such leadership positions on women.
- African Woman especially married ones have various family roles to play towards their husbands and children in addition with office and leadership roles. Often times some of them are in a dilemma of which of the roles should take precedence over the other .
- Authors like Maricnkus and Hamilton (2006) agues that some nursing mothers even considered opting g out of the labour force during child care years as a result of conflicting work demands.
- The participation of women in gainful employment and educational leadership positions for that matter comes with a lot of issues and challenges that were investigated in this study .
- Women tend to have less power in work situations because women who seek to be powerful rather than passive are viewed as selfish, destructive and unfeminine.
- This has aroused an interest to investigate the issues and challenges confronted by these women in management positions of tertiary institutions which hof course may be unique to the female gender and therefore worth investigating.

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THE PROBLEM

•The problem of the present study is thereby stated in question form thus: what are the issues and challenges limiting women leaders in education from performing maximally in contributing their quota to the development of the Nigerian nation as stated in the National policy on Education.

METHODS

The purpose of the study:

The study aimed at finding out the issues and challenges confronting women leaders in tertiary education institutions in South Eastern Nigeria so as to create awareness and discuss possible counselling implications.

PARTICIPANTS

300 purposively selected women non teaching and teaching staff of tertiary institutions in South east of Nigeria participated in the study. The selection was based on type of institution and leadership positions. 50 women in leadership positions were sampled from each of the six tertiary institutions selected for the study. 25 were in teaching/academic leadership positions while 25 were in non academic/non teaching positions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the issues confronting women leaders in tertiary education institutions indentified in South eastern Nigeria?
- What are some challenges confronting women leaders in tertiary education institutions in south eastern Nigeria?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

- There is no significant difference in the issues confronting women leaders in education in south eastern Nigerian tertiary institutions based on position.
- There is no significant difference in the challenges confronting women leaders in education in south eastern Nigerian tertiary institutions based on position

MEASURES

The method of data collection were the use of a 15 item questionnaire and oral interview sessions. Ranking (mean), standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. The reliability coefficient of 0.85 was established using cronbach alpha method. Ten women in teaching and non teaching management positions were purposively selected as participants for personal interview.

RESULTS

- The study revealed that most practicing woman leaders in education in the six south east tertiary institutions in Nigeria are confronted with various issues. The issues are obvious social norms, gender stereotypes, patriarchal based environment lack of self confidence, preference for male leadership inferiority complex and gender based violence.
- Women leaders in education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria encounter series of challenges such as high level of stress, lack of cooperation by male counterparts, long hours of work in the office, dilemma of office work and family role precedence, lack of available facilities especially for accreditation of academic programmes, difficulty in Managing staff conflict, finding a mentor among others.
- Both academic (teaching) and non academic (non teaching) women leaders in Nigerian tertiary institutions are confronted with similar issues and challenges in their different leadership positions.

DISCUSSION

The reasons for all the issues and challenges that confront women leaders in education in Nigerian tertiary institutions might be because of the fact that majority of Nigerians and the public are yet to realize that women are not just homemakers and child bearers. They are still perceived as weaker sex and therefore not expected to be in positions of authority in tertiary institutions of all places. The society is still blind to the role of women in national development.

- The findings aligned with Burns and Martins (2010) whose findings revealed that the most important challenges that female managers in public universities go through included balancing work and family, bureaucracy and combining teaching with managerial work at the same time, work pressure with long working hours and lack of available facilities especially for teaching staff.
- Also Yaro's observation in Nwadinobi and Umezulike (2017) that the overall impact of gender bias, cultural norms and practices has entrenched a feeling of inferiority in women and placed them at a disadvantage vis-vis their male counterparts in the socio-political scene also supports the findings.
- One can deduce from these findings that, the status of being an academic staff or non academic staff was not a determining factor to issues and challenges confronting women leaders in tertiary education institutions in Nigeria. This finding could emanate from the fact that Nigerian women generally have peculiar experiences.
- More so, some men still do not believe in a woman's authority over them thereby creating the problem of difficulty in managing staff conflict and lack of female mentors. This is because of the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society and 'masculinization of the academic' in Nigerian tertiary institutions and this has affected the contributions of women leaders in education negatively.

COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present study makes urgent demand for counselling re-orientation for tertiary institution staff who discourage women leaders in education with their preference for male leadership.

There is need for a functional counselling centre in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria with at least two professional counsellors.

Staff sensitization seminar on the role of women in national development, dealing with the dilemma of office work load and family responsibilities, will be topics of discussion on the seminar which should be organized by the institutions' guidance counsellor.

The institution' education counsellor should work hand in hand with other gender-based organizations and counselling associations to ameliorate and curb obnoxious practices and patriachal mentality that perpetuate preference for male leadership and undervalue of women leaders in Nigerian tertiary education institutions.

The counsellor, from time to time will organize a video documentary of women leaders in Nigerian tertiary education institutions management, portraying their achievements. The documentary will also showcase women in other spheres of leadership in the country so as to build the confidence of both women academic and non-academic staff to aspire for leadership positions irrespective of the issues and challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- Tertiary institution management and government should implement the policy of mounting a befitting counselling center with an institution counsellor in all the tertiary institutions of the country as stipulated in NCCE, NUC, and polytechnics regulating bodies.
- The Nigerian government both at state and federal levels should make concerted efforts to adopt educational policies concerning gender issues in Nigeria tertiary institutions to address such issues in the institutions.
- Women organizations such as women in universities, National Association of women in colleges of Education (WICE) and women in polytechnics in collaboration with counseling Associations in Nigeria should mount workshops on assertiveness training, confidence building, and cognitive restructuring counselling to counsel tertiary institution women in leadership against compromising their positions in leadership for their male counterparts in the name of culture and inferiority complex.
- Every woman in tertiary institution leadership position whether academic or non-academic must learn about coping and adjustment strategies, especially for the reduction of high level of stress emanating from long hours of work in the office.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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