Chapter 14
Ubuntu as a Sustainable Philosophy for School Leadership and Governance:
The Botswana and Nigeria Conflict

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the conflict between Ubuntu and globalization. The advent of globalization is rapidly and inevitably changing the world's development setting. The development has neither been merciful nor friendly to Ubuntu. As a consequence, pressure is mounting for the re-definition and re-positioning of the functions of schools. Ethical leadership and emphasis on multiculturalism are some of the key features that define new school systems. Botswana and Nigeria school leadership systems are explored to generate a more sensitive school leadership model.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the conflict between *Ubuntu* as an Afrocentric social development philosophy and globalization as a Eurocentric economic development philosophy. *Ubuntu,* which is characterized by interconnectedness, common humanity, togetherness, love, respect and appreciation of the shared values, is problematized here not just as a philosophy, but also as a traditional Afrocentric humane approach known for ethical social practice, collective communal leadership and good governance. The chapter uses Botswana and Nigeria that inherited the colonial education system, as a case study. It presents schools as the critical agents of socio-economic and cross-cultural transformation. Robust curriculum delivery and effective ethical leadership systems to impart 21st Century skills and cross-cultural competencies that align to global trends and context-based social needs; and to fit the context of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) are required.

In the next section, an overview of the two countries is given. The two conflicting philosophies are discussed. *Ubuntu* is appropriated as a leadership philosophy relevant to education at a time when schools are required more than ever before to ensure that learners acquire the 21st Century skills and cross-cultural competencies towards the envisioned Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). In the final analysis, the chapter discusses a school leadership framework that appreciates co-existence of the two philosophies in the school systems. Within the framework, an ethical school leadership model that illustrates the practicality of cross-cultural transformation approach by the school system is suggested. The model tries to mediate between *Ubuntu* (Afrocentric philosophy of social development) and globalization (Eurocentric philosophy of economic development) in so far as the legitimacy and mandate of the school can approach education development.

SOCIO-CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Botswana and Nigeria are African countries that are far apart but share both socio-cultural and historical similarities. Botswana, a country in Southern Africa, with surface area of 602,957 km^2, is one of the least populated countries in Africa with about 2,351,627 people in 2020 while Nigeria, located in West Africa with a land surface area of 923,768 km^2 is one of the most populous country with about 206 million people in 2020. The two countries were British protectorates, and therefore received some imposed Eurocentric values in their economic development processes. The protectorate, which is a form of Indirect Rule (Makgala, 2001) was started in Nigeria by Lord Frederick Lugard. Nigeria became free in 1960 and became a Federal Republic (a country made of many federal states or provinces) in 1963. Botswana followed six years later and attained its independence in 1966.

Malebeswa (2020, p. 16) shows how colonialism was forced into Africa at the Berlin Conference in 1885 in "a most indiscriminate and devastating manner". Citing Morton and Ramsay (1987) and Mogalakwe (2006), Malebeswa argues that historians have shown the crude approach in which a decision was amicably taken to partition Africa and share it among thirteen (13) European powers or colonizing countries. Botswana and Nigeria became British protectorates. To sustain the colonial administration of occupied land of Africa, artificial boundaries were created. This caused confusion among the people of the continent. Worse still, within each boundary, some reserves which later became federal states (Nigeria) or districts (Botswana) were established. Resident commissioners from the colonizers were brought into the continent to manage the reserves (Malebeswa, 2020). Malebeswa also agrees with

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