INNOVATIONS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION FOR COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The paper focused on the innovations and challenges for developing home economics curriculum in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. It highlighted the philosophy and objectives of Home Economics as stated in the National Commission for College of Education (NCCE) Minimum Standard. Challenges which inhibit the full implementation of Home Economics were discussed. This includes problem of personnel, vocationalism and competences inadequate funding, lack of equip laboratories, poor attitude and preparation of teachers, insufficient time for practical and team teaching. For effective implementation, the paper recommended research grants, use of ICT (information and Communication Technology) workshops, field trips and good laboratories. Some recommendations were made.

Home economics teaching today is no field for the meek. Courage and imagination are needed in developing the programme to meet the challenges of the present and foreseeable future in interpreting programmes and needs, and in demanding the funds and facilities needed to carry out these programmes. There are so many challenges in curriculum development in home economics at all levels: elementary, secondary, post secondary, adult and professional. There changes are becoming difficult to solve because of the rapidity of societal change and the development of knowledge of the content of home economics in the areas of teaching and learning. The concept of continued learning as a way of life provides challenges to education at all levels and in all fields.

Curriculum as defined by Olaitan and Agusibo (1981) is all learning experiences which are planned and guided the school whether they are carried on by groups or individually inside the school. In other words, it means a wide range of theoretical and practical courses provided in an institution, some of which may be extracurricular activities.

Curriculum is also defined as by Tanner and Tanner (1991) is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes, formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of the school, for the learner’s continuous and willful growth in personal and social competence.

Innovation is change that creates new dimension of performance Minton (2000), uses the term “innovative” to refer to “ideas or practices that are within the context of
the school. Another definition of innovation involves newly introduced method,
customs device. Change in the way of doing things, renew, alter. (Webster’s New,
World Dictionary 2001) doing things differently in different ways (Ducklin 2002).

The Philosophy and Objectives of Home Economics Education

As stated in the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)
minimum standard (2004), the philosophy of Home Economics borders on the
improvement of the quality of life for the individuals and family specifically and the
society at large. It focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences
which family members require to satisfactorily improve family living.

The objectives of the programme are:

- Trained Home Economics teachers with a sound basis for professional growth and
  personal
- development via Home Economics Education.
- Exhibit thorough knowledge of jobs skills and career opportunities in Home
  Economics.
- Demonstrate positive human relationship and ability to work with people.
- Prepare teachers to qualify them for a full time two (2) years post NCE degree
  programme in Home Economics in Nigeria universities.

There are certain challenges in the development of home economics curriculum.
These challenges are inhibiting the implementation of home economics curriculum.
Useful innovations need to be introduced in the curriculum of Home Economics
education at N.C.E. level.

Challenges of Curriculum Development in Home Economics Education at NCE
Level

1. The problem of personnel. Since the inception of the National Policy on
   Education (2004) it has never been easy to recruit vocational teachers for the
   system. Although, efforts were made by the Federal government to train
   vocational technical teachers by establishing more colleges of education
   (Technical) and instituting scholarships. There are few vocational teachers
   available to implement the vocalization programme of National Policy on
   Education (Nwaokolo, 2004).

2. Self Vocationalism and Employment Competences. The curriculum is too
   theoretical and not practical oriented. There are too many courses listed in the
   minimum standard. As a result, the courses are over-crowded and students end
   up not specializing in any area of home economics education.

3. Inadequate funding – insufficient funds are provided in some schools for
   purchasing materials for practical lessons. This makes it difficult for teachers
   to demonstrate concepts. Lack of adequate practical demonstration tends to
   make the concepts abstract. Extra financial burden on the students for the
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purpose of practical makes them develop negative attitude towards the subject (Uzozie, 1990)

4. The problem of well equipped laboratories. Some colleges lack well equipped Home Economics laboratories. Positive achievement in Home Economics is linked to activity based or practical using appropriate laboratory equipment and technology. In the few colleges that have equipment, they are not adequate for the large population of students.

5. Utilization of teaching methods that will arouse and sustain students interest in home economics. When a learner’s interest has been substantially aroused and sustained in a teaching learning – learning process he/she is likely to develop a positive attitude towards the subject. Development of positive attitude is fundamental because achievement is a function of attitude.

6. Poor attitude and preparation of teachers. Poor attitude lead to ineffective implementation of home economics curriculum. Some teachers are not prepared to meet the challenges of modern day home economics. Such teachers fail to make research, improve their skills and are generally careless. Uzozie, (1990) noted that most teachers are not yet trained for proper implementation of the home economics programme.

7. Insufficient time for practical. In some cases the time allotted for practical is insufficient, ranging from two or three hours per period. This is mainly caused by overloading the students’ time table with many other courses. There is need to devise other strategies to cover lost ground.

8. Lack of team teaching. Team teaching is simply based on the recognition teachers differ in their areas of specialization, content, mastery, preference and degree of competency (Hall and Pauolucci, 1973 and Janda, 2001). Goetz and Egallery (2000) further explained that this form of teaching reinforced students understanding of new concepts as the group is exposed to two human resources and two different opportunities to understand new ideas.

Strategies for Implementation of Home Economics Curriculum

Home economics education at N.C.E. level needs innovation and restructuring. This reform is required to improve the performance of home economics education in the country. Obiakor (2006) listed some innovations in Home Economics to include:

1. Research – research is one of the strategies to improve the image of home economics. Home economics is known for her improvisation. Research is the basis for socio-economic, political and scientific and technological advancement of the country.
2. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) - ICT is a powerful tool that the home economist could use for mobilization, information exchange and empowerment. Teaching and learning would be made easier through the use of ICT.

3. Workshops: should be organized for students and teachers. Workshops should be organized for students and teachers of Home Economics. This will provide a platform for interaction, exchange of ideas, learning new things and keeping in touch with current issues. Workshops should be geared towards skill acquisition rather than fees charged and certificate got.

4. Provision of good laboratories. Home Economics laboratories should be available in all school offering the course. The laboratories should be well equipped with the necessary facilities and materials just like other science laboratories. Electricity and water should be in constant supply to avoid frustrations. Equipment and materials should be improvised by teachers and students where the ideal is not available. If in place, the teachers should have the required skilled to bring it to fruitening.

5. S I W E S (Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme). According to Agwasim and Agwasim (1985), SIWES is a medium by which students are exposed to the realities of the world of work in their chosen vocations. It exposes students to relevant industry based skills needed for smooth transition to the world of work. This scheme should be made effective through proper supervision.

6. Provision of relevant literature. Home Economics textbooks are scarce. Most of the textbooks available for specific aspects of Home Economics are foreign. Teachers should rise up to this challenge and write Home Economics textbooks having familiar examples.

7. Field trips – it can be effective in curriculum implantation. It involves trips to various places in the community to obtain information directly by seeing things as they are. It provides an on the spot observation of some specific process or activity.

**Conclusion**

Home economics is a dynamic and evolving profession whose major concern is the welfare and sustainable development of the individual, the family and the society. The curriculum should be planned to meet the rapid changes and the needs of society.
Recommendations
The following recommendations were made based on the followings:

1. The home economist must be computer literate in order to access and utilize the enormous data being made available by new information technology: ICT should be used in teaching and learning in Home Economics Education.

2. Researches should be well funded so that students and teachers can carry out their research work effectively.

3. Provision should be made for further training of teachers.

4. Practical should be well funded. Practical at N.C.E. level should be standardized and externally moderated.

5. Students should be made to specialize in Home Economics Curriculum, particular area of home economics at NCE level.

6. The curriculum should be geared towards self employment. More practical courses should be included.

References


