

HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION: ITS CHALLENGES AND CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

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Abstract

The study investigated the challenges faced in Home Economics Education and the roles of Home Economics Education in the national development. The population of this study comprised all the people of Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted Expost-Facto research design, while stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. The instrument for data collection which was tagged “Challenges and Roles of Home Economics Education to the National Development Questionnaire (CRHEENDQ) was administered to the respondents and used for the study. The instrument was vetted by experts in statistics, test and measurement before the reliability test was conducted with 30 respondents which produced the reliability coefficient of 0.77, proving the instrument to be reliable for the study. Data collected were analysed using mean statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. From the results of the data analysis, it was observed that there are various challenges facing home economics in Nigeria, including few vocational teachers available to implement the vocalization programme of National Policy on Education. It was also observed that there is significant relationship between Home Economics Education and the national development. The conclusion was that home economics education faces so many challenges and that it also contributes immensely to the national development. It was therefore recommended that government should endeavour to implement all the recommendations made in any research work especially that of home economics considering its roles in national development. It was also recommended that all the identified challenges should be eradicated by the government and the authorized persons.

Home Economics has a long and successful history in development. However limited but parallel in many ways to what Agriculture in the areas of research, technical assistance, education and training. The theoretical rationale and scope of home economics has moved far beyond the conventional image of sewing and cooking, to embrace the ecological and economic relationships of rural families: the household and its near environment. 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, family and the Society. It focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences which family members require to satisfactorily improve family living. Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environmental and developmental issues. This is also applicable to Home Economics.

The concept of sustainability has come to be regarded as both a goal in development assistance programs, and as an approach to development policies (Eckman 1993). FAO defines sustainability as: "The management and conservation of the natural resource and the reorientation of technological and institutional in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. Such sustainable development as practiced in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors conserves land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable, and socially acceptable" (FAO 1988).

Arukwe (1992) noted that the solutions to Nigerian present economic problems couldn't exclude the intensification of Home Economics education for the citizenry. Olaferu-Olagbegi (1988), observed that combating unemployment in Nigeria through the creation of self-employment, emphasizes the establishment of small-scale enterprises in rural areas by skilled personnel who are products of home economics education. Here teachers' experiences and classroom practice result from teachers own values and beliefs. Although the propensity for adopting sustainability depends on teacher's attitudes towards or receptivity, it may not be an accurate predictor of implementation (Morris, 1996; Gough, 1997). Teachers' attitudes can be crucial in determining success or failure (Richardson, 1991). Moroye (2009) and Smith (2004) found that beliefs are not separate from teachers' practice but are integral to who they are in the classroom.

Home Economics teachers should be 'efficient, effective and skillful. That is why Marving, Kinder and Schunert (1977) argued that the effective teacher should have good understanding of the subject he teaches and that by so doing, there is bound to be rapid economic and national development. Yet there are certain challenges facing Home Economics curriculum in contributing to National Development. In view of the forgoin

g, this study seeks to assess the innovations and challenges of Home Economics Education; for National Development.

Statement of the Problem

The role of Home Economics as an important aid to vocational education has led to studies identifying the problems of teaching and learning the subject. Much of the concern centers on the schools, the teacher and the government etc. It is obvious that the performance and attitude of students in this subject are not encouraging. There are so many challenges in curriculum development in home economics at all levels: elementary, secondary, post secondary, adult and professional. These challenges 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 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. Thus, this study seeks to identify the challenges faced in Home Economics Education; the effect of Home Economics Education on National Development.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the challenges faced in Home Economics Education and to examine the roles of Home Economics Education in National Development. The objectives: of the study are;

1. To find out the challenges of Home Economics Education.
2. To determine the relationship between Home Economics Education and National Development.

Research questions

The following research questions will be answered:

1. What are the challenges facing Home Economics Education?
2. What is the relationship between Home Economics Education and National Development?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses will be tested:

There is no significant relationship between Home Economics Education and National Development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Challenges of Curriculum Development in Home Economics Education

According to (Nwaokolo, 2004), these are the challenges faced in Home Economics Education such as follows:

1. The problem of personnel; since the inception of the National Policy on Education (2004) 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.
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 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.
5. Utilization of teaching methods that will arouse and sustain students interest in Home Economics.
6. Poor attitude and preparation of teachers. Poor attitude leads to ineffective implementation of Home Economics curriculum.
7. Insufficient time for practical. In some cases the time allotted for practical is insufficient, ranging from two or three hours per period.
8. Lack of team teaching. Team teaching is simply based on the recognition that teachers differ in their methods of teaching.

Sustainable Development and Home Economics Education

Home Economics is a subject studied around the world, and is defined by the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) in the 21st Century as a “field of study and a profession, situated in the human sciences that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities” (IFHE, 2008). The position statement argues that the profession is currently enjoying renewed attention because of its “imperative of improving the world in which we all live such that sustainable development is possible” (IFHE, 2008 p.2). Regardless of this claim, sustainable development education research has neglected studies of Home Economics and its teachers’ perceptions as factors affecting the capacity of schools to achieve sustainable development goals. One study of initial

teacher education programs in America (Heimlich, Braus, Olivolo, McKeown-Ice & Barringer-Smith, 2004) found that almost a fifth of the programs incorporate environmental education into a discipline. The strongest perceived fit by teacher educators was into environmental sciences with family living/home economics trailing towards the end as a perceived fit.

In offering direction for Home Economics, Pendergast (2006) suggests that the subject is at a convergent moment. A number of interconnected societal factors such as sustainability, global consumption, health and social justice are aligning around the profession. There is therefore growing alignment with the intentions of Home Economics to play a pivotal role in the development of informed global citizenry. Dewhurst and Pendergast (2008, 2009) noted several socially just and ethical practices of Home Economics teachers in Australia, Malta and Scotland, suggesting that home economics contributes to giving young people a sense of their own skill as well as a sense of social responsibility towards and with others. Arai (2008) and Nielson and Gottschau (2008) also argue for a nurturance of action-oriented consumer citizens who actively practice and promote sustainable development in everyday life.

Method

An Expost-Facto design was used for this study. In this type of design the researcher cannot manipulate the effect on the dependent variable but just obtain the effect already existing in the natural course of events. The research area for this study was Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study consisted of all adolescent students in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The respondents in the study consisted of 300 adolescent students. They were obtained through the simple random sampling technique where 30 students were selected from 10 schools each. The researchers developed one instrument tagged “Challenges and Roles of Home Economics Education to the National Development Questionnaire. (CRHEENDQ). The questionnaire was made up of two sections, sections A and B. Section A is made up of the personal data of the respondents while section B is made up the main variables of the objectives of the study. There were two variables such as the challenges and roles of Home Economics education to the National Development. For the challenges in section B eight items measures it but for the roles of home economy to national development five items measured it. The total numbers of items were 13 in this section. The questionnaire is a four point scale type ranging from strongly agrees to strongly disagree. The instrument was validated by the experts in test and measurement. Crombach Alpha technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument (CRHEENDQ), using 30 respondents who did not form part of the main study were randomly selected and the instrument administered on them. Data collected from the respondents were subjected to reliability test and it produced the reliability coefficients of 0.77. A letter of introduction and permission was presented to the principal of each secondary school visited for data

collection. This was done accordingly and there was cooperation from the school management, teachers and students with respect to the administration and retrieval of questionnaires. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as weighted means and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results and Discussions

What are the challenges of Home Economics Education?

Table 1

Weighted mean analysis of the challenges of Home Economics Education.

N=300

ALLENGES	SD	MEAN(\bar{X})
Problem of personnel	0.73	3.15
Self vocationalism and Employment Competences	0.58	3.4**
Inadequate funding	0.89	2.9*
Problem of well equipped laboratories	0.81	2.95
Utilization of teaching Methods	0.60	3.2
Poor attitude and preparation of teachers	0.79	3.15
Insufficient time for practical	0.73	3.35
Lack of team teaching	0.64	3.3

Source: Field Survey

The result of the above table 1 presents the weighted mean analysis of the challenges of Home Economics Education. From the result of the analysis it was observed that the greatest challenges of Home Economics Education was self vocationalism and employment (3.4) with inadequate funding (2.9) as the least challenge.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there no significant relationship between Home Economics Education and National Development. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was then used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables (see table 2).

Table 2
Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between Home Economics Education and the national development

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	r
Home economics education (x)	3637	44661				
National development (y)			41540	3392	38736	0.84*

***Significant at 0.05 level; df =298; N =300; critical r–value = 0.139**

Table 2 presents the obtained r-value as (0.84). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.139) at 0.05 levels with 298 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.84) was greater than the critical r-value (0.139). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between Home Economics Education and National Development. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted. The result is in agreement with the research findings Pendergast (2006), who suggests that the subject is at a convergent moment. A number of interconnected societal factors such as sustainability, global consumption, health and social justice are aligning around the profession.

Conclusion

1. Lack of adequate practical demonstration tends to make the concepts abstract.
2. There are various challenges facing Home Economics in Nigeria, including few vocational teachers available to implement the vocalization programme of National Policy on Education
3. There is significant relationship between Home Economics Education and National Development.

Recommendations

1. Government should endeavour to implement all the recommendations made in any research work especially that of Home Economics considering its roles in national development.
2. All the identified challenges should be eradicated by the government and authorized persons.

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