

CHALLENGES FACING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HOME ECONOMICS FOR JOB CREATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Akanbi Temitayo Lois & Babatunde Lois Bolanle

*Department of Home Economics
Kwara State College Of Education Oro*

Abstract

This paper discusses the capability of Home Economics education in creating jobs to reduce unemployment among the Nigerian youths which will result in sustainable Economic Development of Nigeria. It also defines Home Economics Education within the provisions of the National Policy on Education. Philosophy of Home Economics Education is also defined. In African states, including Nigeria, much emphasize is not given to Home Economics which is a major instrument for the nations rapid and sustainable development with proper planning and implementation. Home economics is capable of creating millions of jobs for Nigerian youths. This will lead to sustainable economic development for Nigeria in particular and African continent in general. The capability of Home Economics for job creation is not doubted but constrained by several challenges among which are poor funding, lack of training personnel and facilities. In order to overcome these challenges, it is recommended that Home Economics experts, government officials and the business world should work together for the purpose of job creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable economic development.

Introduction

Background to the Study

Home Economics is one of the vocational and technical subjects taught at all levels in primary, secondary and higher institutions in Nigeria and is a compulsory part of the curriculum in the schools. It is taught as a fundamental subject and comprises food and nutrition, clothing and textile, home management, housing and interior decoration, child development and care, consumer education etc. The importance of exposing learners to home economics curriculum for individual and societal development has been widely acknowledge and revealed that the knowledge and skills gained with

home economics make a considerable contribution to young people's personal and social development as well as prepare them for the world of works in a wide range of area. It provides learners with opportunities to develop knowledge and in both theoretical and practical aspects of livelihood (Federal Ministry of Education, 2012). A strong background in home economics curriculums is crucial for many careers and job opportunities in today's increasingly technologically society. Skill is the ability to do something expertly and well. It is an organized sequence of actions. According to Njoku (2022), to posses skill is to demonstrate the habit of acting, thinking and behaving in a specific activity in such a way that the process becomes natural to the individual through repetition or practice. The development of skill is an important function of educational institutions, especially among tertiary institution students. To this effect, the National Policy on Education opined that, there is roles vocational can play in individual in satisfying the manpower needs of the nation, hence the inclusion of vocational subject like Home Economics. Consequently, it has been observed that there are many problems confronting the teaching and learning of Home economics in schools as revealed by many writers on problems of Home economics in Nigeria. Some of them are lack of finance to buy needed textbooks, inadequate teachers, lack of well equipped laboratories in schools, inappropriate and ineffective method of teaching, lack of control over the attitudes of students and teachers, poor management of schools and others which have contributed to low level of teaching home economics in schools. Okorie (2020), revealed that for effective teaching to take place, the skilful teacher needs to use the many effective method and techniques effectively because in them his successes and failure depends. He further more emphasized that the success in the use of methods depends of the intelligent analysis of educational purposes, pupils and students in the class and the curriculum content of the moment. A few moments reflection is sufficient to reveal that every society faces crucial issues and problems in education which have

very serious Home Economics benefits that cannot be overlooked easily for instance, the production of education as well as the acquisition of education both require the use of large quantities of scarce resources (production of education require conducive classrooms, administrative blocks, personal, librarians, laboratories of education require expenditures on tuition, books, travels, uniform, lodging etc and students time. This will give insight to the challenges facing effective teaching and learning of Home Economics for job creation and national development.

Home Economics Education And Entrepreneurship

Home Economics education is inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary. It is a field of study with various marketable skills that can ensure reliance and employment. Mbah, (2021), labels Home Economic Education as the people's profession because it is a multi-discipline functional delivery system. Olaitan and Agusiobo (2022) define Home Economics as that field of study that is concerned with strengthening individuals and family life by providing functional knowledge and skills. Tupac (2020) opines that Home Economics Education is a means through which the individual may be led to a stronger growth and development, thus enabling him to take responsibility in the family and society. In the definition of Home Economics above, functionality is emphasized. This implies the ability of knowledge and skills gained to help individual who has acquired them to be able to relate to real life situations and solve their needs.

Home Economics Education can be seen, therefore, as the solution to the many problems facing individuals, families, communities in Nigeria particularly in the areas of skill acquisition, inter-personal family relationship, healthy living, resource management, poverty reduction and job creation. In Nigeria, time and trends have evolved over the years with regards to what functional and creative education should be. With the competitive global business world and the emergence of knowledge economy,

the challenge for home economics education is therefore to prepare graduates who can connect the body global market of knowledge. In line with the spirit of entrepreneurship (Onyibo (2021) reported that the Federal Government of Nigeria has directed the establishment of entrepreneurship centers in the university and other higher institutions of learning so as to enhance entrepreneurship education in which Home Economics is one of the course or subject to offer. These centers are to be funded by the Education Tax Fund and students are expected to channel the knowledge and energies acquired at devising creative strategies and learning skills to function as entrepreneurs in Home economics. Home Economics Educations and entrepreneurship are two sides of the same coin, Home Economics Education is a key player in entrepreneurship development process and so has important role to play in reducing massive graduate unemployment and the social menace which it represents. The questions before us is how to address the challenges in teaching and learning Home Economics for job creation and National Development in Nation as well as contribute to family and national building. Home Economics education must evolve to be in tune with current global business change and challenges.

The Role of Home Economics In Job Creation

According to McGregor (2016), Home Economics is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary. It is a field of knowledge with numerous marketable skills that make for self - reliance and self employment. Situated in the human Science, Home Economics draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities. Home Economics Education embraces so many separate but interrelate fields such as Food, Nutrition, Clothing, Textile, Applied Arts, Housing, Household equipment Home Management, Family Economics, Child Development, Home furnishing Interior and Exterior Decoration, Consumer Education, Entrepreneurship Education and Environmental Education (Uzoka, 2021). Home Economics draws ideas from core sciences like

Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Engineering, Architecture etc applied in various sub units of Home Economics.

Specific Areas of Home Economics For Job Creation

Food and Nutrition - is one of the areas in Home Economics. Some basic knowledge and application of food synthesis and utilization is employed by the Home Economist to develop food products. There are so many life sustaining skills available in the knowledge of food and nutrition. This include bread making, preparation of snacks; nuts, meats, chicken, cakes, chin chin, dough nuts, buns, popcorn, drinks (kunun zaki, kunun aya, zobo), spices like kayan yaji and flavor enhancers. Through this knowledge the youth can acquire skills that can enable him/her engage in the processing, packaging and sales of foods and related items.

Catering, restaurant and bar business- where different dishes for all ages in all works of life can be served are avenues for job creation. Graduates can also engage in livestock production, fish farming and vegetable gardening. Home Management, another area of Home Economics can be very lucrative. Skills acquired can be useful in soap, detergents, disinfectants, pomade making for sale. House/shop keeping, sales of recharge cards, fire woods, charcoal, and styling of head gear, bead making, and production of household decorative articles are lucrative ventures taught to Home Economics graduates. Decorations of both indoor and outdoor venues for social events, home gardening is great income earning ventures taught in Home Economics. The skills for hair dressing such as hair weaving, plaiting and braiding can also be used to earn a living by the youths.

Clothing and Textile- a major branch of Home Economics imparts skills to students at all levels of Education in Nigeria. Knowledge of textiles affords graduates of Home Economics expertise in fabric production, sale of textile products, textile designing, weaving, dyeing and batik making, knitting and all forms of fabric construction for sale.

Youths can engage in sewing, construction of clothing accessories, they can sew clothes for themselves and other family members to save cost and create wealth. They can also engage in the sales of sewing materials, dye stuff, trimmings and accessories in the same place where sewing or tie dyeing is done. Other job creation areas to practice under Clothing are: Fashion Designing, Pattern Illustration, Dry Cleaning and Laundering, Modeling and Cosmetology. Graduates of clothing and textile can work in fashion industries. He/she wears newly designed dress/style for people to see and buy (Anyakoha, 2017).

Family and Child Development: another area of Home Economics is where useful entrepreneurship skills acquired can enable the unemployed youth to become an employer of labour. They can work as child care providers, private homes can be converted into Day Care Centers for children of working women in the neighborhood who cannot afford the cost of taking their children to standard nursery centers. They can also engage in toy production using locally sourced for materials.

Lack of Training Personal and Facilities in a Nation

The federal government of Nigeria has not come to appreciate the contribution of vocational and technical programme (of which Home Economics Education is one) to national development even though it is a tool to combat unemployment and poverty in our societies. Home Economics is being taught in both junior and senior secondary schools in the whole states in Nigeria. Based on the observation of Kwara State the students in government schools are performing poorly in this subject which is now posing some challenges to the educational system of the state. The problem statement stated in question form therefore, is "could the classroom learning environment in Home Economics be so discouraging to the extent that students are no longer encouraged to participate in the Home Economics lessons?" Teaching: the process of attending to people needs experiences and feelings, and making specific

interventions to help them learn particular things. The Home Economist is concerned with the domestic well-being of individuals, the family and the community and the work entails the improvement of products and practices that affect almost everyone in our society. Home Economics offers a range of exciting career options related to foods, nutrition, housing and clothing etc. Most Home Economists teach in various types of educational institutions. Some work closely with the media to promote products. Others conduct research in an area of personal interest in this field. Most home economists supervise at least one or other employee.

Depending on the employer or area of interest, home economists can be involved in: food, nutrition and catering, clothing and clothing construction, interior planning, design and decorating, family interaction, consumer behaviour and promotion of products, research, Teaching and training. More specialized aspects include:

Counseling: home economics counseling is given informally and is aimed at developing every family member within the family's income and their physical, mental and intellectual abilities. Individuals, organizations and associations are provided with information by means of projects and demonstrations, posters, audio-visual aids, pictures, pamphlets, placards, cookbooks, etc.

Education: teaching at schools, colleges, universities of technology and universities.

Journalism: the press, radio and television offer interesting opportunities for a person who is original and creative. The home economist may become a journalist on a full-time, part-time or freelance basis. Many home economists write books or columns for newspapers and magazines.

Promotions: work in this field includes the testing of recipes, the preparation of food for photograph, advertisements and demonstrations as well as the presentation of lectures and courses.

Catering: Home economists may be responsible for providing food to groups of people on a small or large scale at school, university and university of technology hostels or at industrial and commercial

institutions. They can also work at a hotel or a hospital.

Interior Decoration: A person with artistic talents can specialize in interior decoration, or can become a private consultant in the furniture industry or other companies that do interior decoration.

Research: Industry employs home economists to promote equipment and products and to develop new food products or recipes. Home economists work in a very large variety of work settings. The actual setting is determined by the type, size, location and financial resources of the employer, and by the specialty, experience and education of the home economist. Some positions require evening work and extensive travel.

Personal Requirements

- able to get along well with others
- want to teach or help people
- leadership ability
- able to write and speak well
- good organizational skills
- initiative, imagination and originality

Home Economics in Schools is lack of interest in the subject. This could be due to many factors/reasons such as lack of fund to purchase necessary items for teaching; poor methods of teaching. Some of the students believe that studying Home Economics is strenuous. This could be due to much practical work it involves. The problem of lack of facilities and equipment has been found to prevent students from choosing to study Home Economics. Udom (2015) concluded that all complains about the teaching of Home Economics are mostly shortage of teachers, equipment and accommodation. Anyakoha (20147) found that the adequate utilization of instructional materials and equipment can motivate and sustain students' interest. They also clarify information, present new ideas and stimulate discussion. Some of the students stated that they prefer other subjects to Home Economics. Others feel that the subject is meant for only female. This could be due to the fact that

many people are ignorant of the importance of Home Economics to individuals and national development.

Another factor/reason for low student's enrolment to study Home Economics is that the students find it very expensive to purchase some of the items for the study of the subject. The expensive nature of Home Economics was noted by Uzor (2019). Students also complained of too much practical's in Home Economics. Many items are required to be purchased. This is why the subject is seen as being very expensive to study.

Another problem is the misconception that Home Economics is meant for only females. Eze (2020); Uwadie (2019) observed that Home Economics is viewed as a female domain. Those who attempted to study the subject were laughed at by students who study other subjects. This is due to lack of knowledge about the importance of Home Economics in national development Ode (2018). Eze (2020) stated that the study of Home Economics does not exclude any sex.

Lack of knowledge about the importance of Home Economics was identified as one of the factors/reasons for student's low enrolment of the subject. This could be that most of the teachers do not stress the importance of the subject while teaching the subject at secondary school levels.

This could also be responsible for lack of knowledge about the career opportunity in Home Economics. This could also make the students to prefer other subjects to Home Economics. Imonikebe (2021) believed that Home Economics is a course for male and female which helps to acquire basic skills for gainful employment, family living and self-reliance.

Some parents discourage their children especially male children from studying Home Economics. Some parents feel that the course is only for females. Others feel that there are better subjects than Home Economics. Oliatan and Auguisiobo (2022) found that there is much disregard for Home Economics by parents this is caused by the misconception about vocational education as the

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education suitable for handicapped people with low intelligent quotient. This could also be responsible for the poor image of Home Economics as such, students who study other subject.

Home Economics performed the following roles; for food preparation; service of food; selection of clothing; making clothing; child care; discussion on aesthetic matters; textile designs out-door catering services. Home Economics study involve the following roles; skills for purchasing of goods and services; making choice of furniture; discussing economic matters; discussing social matters; discussing managerial matters; discussing health matters; need for family relationship; solving housing problems; skills needed by dietician in hospitals; event planning; special home management such as orphanage, old people's homes, hospitality management, and consumer responsibility. The results show that the students are ignorant of these other roles of Home Economics programme. This may be the reason why Home Economics do not enjoy high enrolment in schools as students are not aware of (some) job opportunities offered by the subject.

Many reasons can be put forward as to why the students were not aware of these motivate roles of Home Economics study. This may be due to the fact that the items are not related to the two basic needs of home-food and clothing. The students therefore failed to recognize such roles as for Home Economics programme. This is in line with Uzoezie (2017) and Akuezulo (2018) that students perceive Home Economics as kitchen related only; that is seen as a subjects which cannot take one outside the four walls of the home and kitchen (ode 2018).

Conclusion

Many challenges in teaching and learning home economics for job creation and national development in Home Economics programme in the nation were identified. Some of such constraints include; lack of facilities/equipment/materials for teaching the subject, the subject is time consuming, ignorance of career opportunities in Home Economics among others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Government, University, NGOs should provide facilities/equipment/materials and fund to promote effective teaching and learning.
2. Parents should encourage their children to study Home Economics; they should also provide enough finance /resources for their children to study the subject.
3. The name of Home Economics should be change to remove the poor image attached to it.
4. Students should be taught the importance of Home Economics and the career opportunities available in the subject.
5. There is need for enlightenment campaign through seminars, mass media about the importance of Home Economics and the career opportunities that the subject provides to students and the society. This is necessary because a lot of people are not aware of the importance of the subject in national development.
6. Students should be taken on excursion/field trips to various established areas of Home Economics such as food processing industries, textile mills, sewing institutions. This will give them opportunity to see both males and females employed to work in these areas.

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