
**Rebuilding Trust in Home Economics Education for National Development:
Imperatives for Academic Ethics and Integrity in Akwa Ibom State**

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ABSTRACT

This paper carefully discussed on rebuilding trust in home economics education for national development. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. Needs assessment survey research design was adopted for the study with the population comprising of all home economics experts in Akwa Ibom State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) home economists from each of the three senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State which gave the total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents that constituted the sample size used for the study. The Instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Home Economics Education and National Development Questionnaire "(HEENDQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test measurement and evaluation to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness and completeness for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.80 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics for answering the research questions. The paper concluded that home economics education contributes to the development of individuals and families as functioning units of society. In addition, home economics prepares students to use entrepreneurial skills, accept challenges, adjust and adapt in a climate of change, experiment and use creativity, make informed judgments, and apply reasoned action to practical life situations. One of the recommendations made amongst others was that, there is need to reorganize home economics curriculum to have balance between knowledge and skills and values, so that the curriculum become competency based.

KEYWORDS: Home Economics Education, Academic ethics, Academic integrity, & National development

Introduction

The pride of any government is the attainment of a higher value level of development in such a way that its citizens will derive a natural attachment to governance. However, for a nation to be in a phase of development, there must be some pre-requisites, which include socio-political and economic stability. Professional development opportunities for Home Economics educators, such as school division meetings and an annual provincial Home Economics conference, focus on skills-based

activities like cake decorating, pasta making, and sewing project swaps. Apple (2015) argues that the closure, downsizing, and restructuring of home economics programmes have led to fragmentation within the field, leading to a lack of cohesion with regard to the broader goals of the discipline. Critical social and ecological justice pedagogy for home economics requires a supporting curriculum with higher-order thinking outcomes. Lower-order thinking outcomes and pedagogies contribute to the marginalisation of the discipline as the skills-based, hands-on projects seem more engaging and appear to have more value than theory-based activities. This leads to the prioritising of what Apple (2015) refers to as the clichéd skills of cooking, sewing, and design—a common reduction of Home Economics education.

Foster (2013) and McGregor (2016) posit that addressing our current ecological crises means understanding the links between ecological health and broader social stratification issues based on race, class, gender, region, and other variables of inequity. According to Foster, the necessity of addressing ecological sustainability for the sake of survival is inextricably tied to human freedom. Developing a consciousness of the root causes of the issues, finding alternatives to consumer paradigms that hurt people, animals, and the planet, and empowering consumers as citizens to hold governments and corporations accountable for policies that protect our world is the way forward (Foster, 2013; McGregor, 2016). Kumashiro (2015) and Westheimer (2015) agree that teachers should confront students with troubling knowledge to unsettle their understandings, with the goal of recognising paradoxes visible from alternate perspectives. For Home Economics, a major paradox centres on consumerism: we need to purchase items such as food, clothing, and shelter for survival, although this contributes to many injustices to people, animals, and the environment.

Statement of Problem

Today's homes are involved in shaping national development since the lifestyle choices people make in everyday life have a far-reaching impact on both a local and global level. Societies are also changing rapidly, and coming generations will face multiple societal and environmental challenges such as climate change, globalization, poverty, and economic inequalities. Today's educational institutions need to prepare the next generation for the challenges of a constantly changing society and somehow capitalise on the novel pedagogical potential of digitalization. It is on this ground that this paper carefully tries to discuss the effect of rebuilding trust in home economic education for the purpose of national development.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of home economics education on national development. The researcher puts the people's perception Home Economic under consideration. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Assess the challenges faced in Home Economics as a practice.
2. Find out the extent to which Home Economics has contributed to national development.
3. To ascertain how to rebuild trust in Home Economics Education.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered.

1. What are the challenges faced in Home Economics as a practice?
2. To what extent has Home Economics contributed to national development?
3. What strategies can be used to rebuild trust in Home Economics Education?

Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis states that:

1. There is no significant influence of Home Economics on the national development.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Home Economics Education

Home economics education advocates for positive change in home life experiences for individuals and families. It is the foundation of knowledge, attitudes, and abilities that affect daily decision-making throughout our lives. Students critically examine significant daily concerns in terms of their implications for themselves, their family, and society. Home economics education contributes to the development of individuals and families as functioning units of society. In addition, home economics prepares students to use entrepreneurial skills, accept challenges, adjust and adapt in a climate of change, experiment and use creativity, make informed judgments, and apply reasoned action to practical life situations. Home economics consists of five interdependent areas:

- Human Development
- Food and Nutrition
- Financial Management
- Clothing and Textiles
- Shelter and Housing

Students explore many of the perennial challenges of everyday life. Through a modular approach, students are engaged in experiences that develop attitudes, skills, and understandings essential for the maintenance and improvement of family life as well as national development. Students develop an awareness that personal decisions affect the quality of one's life and those around them. Topics include: child care, clothing care, food and nutrition, money management and consumerism, and personal living space.

Home Economics Intermediate is designed for students to explore the underlying topics in home economics along with the major areas contained within the subject area. By gaining knowledge, insight, and skills related to many of the perennial challenges of everyday life, young people will grow in both confidence and the ability to direct their own futures and achieve healthy lifestyles.

There are six modules to be completed during the intermediate years

- Introductory Module

- Child Care Module
- Clothing Care Module
- Foods and Nutrition Module
- Money Management and Consumerism Module
- Personal Living Space Module

Concept of National Development

National development is a comprehensive term which includes the following: improvement in the living standards of the people; an increase in per capita income; providing social amenities like education, medical care, social services, etc. to the citizens of the country. A nation is a large community of people sharing a common language, common culture, common history, and a common constitution and government. Development is associated with modernization, material advancement, industrialization, scientific and technological progress, the emergence of nuclear energy, the electronic and biological revolution, and new knowledge about man and the universe. It means urbanization, socio-cultural transformation, mass literacy, vertical and horizontal mobility, employment opportunities, and the emergence of specialised and independent occupational roles (Umuru, 2002). For example, Nigeria is a nation and its nationals share common characteristics with a nation, such as binding principles and policies.

The ultimate goal of national development must be to improve the well-being of individuals and bestow benefits on all through self-reliance and mobilisation of domestic resources, transformation of rural production structures, development of small-scale industries, and acquisition of technological and scientific skills. According to Umaru (2008), these objectives are stale, but well-conceived, planned, and directed policies and programmes are required for their realization. This means that development is about self-reliance in every aspect of national life. As soon as individuals are made to acquire specialised skills that will enable them to help develop the nation, the nation will become developed. This accounts for the difference between the developed nations and the underdeveloped nations. According to Alabi (2008), the major factor responsible for the wide gap in the level of development between the so-called developed nations and the developing nations is the level of development of pure and applied science in these nations.

Concept of Academic Ethics

The term "ethics" is generally used to refer to rules and principles of right and wrong conduct. It therefore boils down to morality and good or bad conduct. Academic ethics are the moral codes or the shared standards of an academic enterprise and are at the core of its success (Occidental College, 2016). Basically, academic ethics requires each student to be honest, responsible, fair, respectful, give credit where it is due, turn in their original work, and etc. (Michigan State University, n.d.). Academic integrity requires students to do their own work without unauthorised help from others, cheating, lying, plagiarizing, and stealing. Academic integrity is important because it shows that the student is trustworthy and honest enough to do his or her own work, whether someone is looking or not. The term "ethics" is generally used to refer to rules and principles of right and wrong conduct. It therefore boils down to morality and good or bad conduct.

Concept of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity stands for the ethical policy or the moral code of the realm of academia. Upholding academic integrity is the responsibility of students, researchers, or academicians. Any person related to academics has to be honest in his or her approach, and that should reflect in the fields of research and academic publishing. The person should also be committed to maintaining the highest academic standards in his or her work. Moreover, there should be vehement avoidance of cheating or plagiarism in the individual's works. Thus, academic integrity stands for the way in which a person conducts himself or herself within the domain of academic work. Academic integrity is reflective of the personal integrity of the individual as it involves a moral code and ethical beliefs. According to Dhamdhere (2015), the very central ambition of all academic institutions is to impart and share knowledge among the people of the academic community across the globe. Students who cheat their way to acquire their degree never become knowledgeable.

Challenges Faced in Home Economics as a Practice

The following challenges are common to home economics:

- Lack of finance to buy needed text books
- Inadequate teachers
- Lack of well-equipped laboratories
- Inappropriate and ineffective method of teaching
- Lack of control over the attitude of students and teachers
- Poor management of school

Effect of Home Economics Education on National Development

The road to becoming a developed nation involves a process of change. Development is essentially a forward movement from one state of being to another at a higher level. This movement requires changes in many aspects of life for the individual and their society. The process of change starts with resources, both human and non-human, and ends with human development. This framework revolves around the human dimension, for it is the central force and ingredient in development. It is the people of the nation that initiate the changes, carry out the changes, and benefit from the changes. Non-human resources, for example (natural resources, financial resources, and so on), cannot produce development on their own; they must be used by humans. It is also the people who do the work of changing the systems, the structure, the culture, and even the people themselves, for progress. Finally, development is aspired to for the people. This is the human development paradigm of national development. This is how leaders view national development in the Philippines and its social reform agenda. How does home economics fit into this framework of development? Home economics does not by itself produce the desirable changes necessary for national development to occur. It is the Filipino people, as a nation, who work for the development-oriented changes to come to fruition. Home economics can, however, be a catalyst for change.

In the context of development, a catalyst is any person, thing, organization, or institution that affects the rate of change toward development. A catalyst provokes, speeds up, or slows down the change. Home economics enters into the change process by facilitating progress. "(As) the change agent vibrant with life and energy, (it) lends

impetus to promote and accelerate change for progress." As an agent of change, a catalyst performs these functions:

Stimulus agent

A catalyst can provoke or initiate positive changes in individual or family life, thus speeding up the rate of exchange toward national development. They set new directions for their families for the improvement of their lives. Change is derived from a rational decision to directly affect family life. Home economists "must" take the initiative to effectively solve family problems in order to improve family living, rather than simply adjusting to current plans of living. Home economists have initiated changes in individual and family conditions by:

- a. Providing knowledge and skills which can be used by families to improve living conditions (income, health and nutrition);
- b. Improving household technology in order for women to have opportunities to earn a living;
- c. Campaigning for the recognition of the value and capabilities of women;
- d. Home economists assist children, youth and adults especially the women to learn better skills;
- e. For accomplishing daily tasks. Emphasis should be given to appropriate training in the knowledge and skills geared towards international competitiveness and sustainable development.
- f. It is essential for home economists to become intimately involved in empowering women;
- g. Demanding their rights as citizens to economic security through productive activities.
- h. Home economists must recognize that the condition of women must be improved, particularly the lack of power of women.
- i. Home economists must be intimately involved with the issues and concerns of women. They have control over their own destinies. This includes documenting the conditions of women, advocating change, and ultimately conducting research and practising the profession to the end of helping women and children have a better quality of life. To accomplish long-lasting sustainable development, it is necessary to consider women's involvement in developing, administering, and evaluating the programmes being introduced to help them meet the challenges of their lives.

Home economists assist children, youth, and adults, especially women, to learn better skills for accomplishing daily tasks. Emphasis should be given to appropriate training in the knowledge and skills geared towards international competitiveness and sustainable development. It is essential for home economists to become intimately involved in empowering women, i.e., in demanding their rights as citizens to economic security through productive activities. Home economists must recognise that the condition of women must be improved, particularly the lack of power of women over their own destinies. Home economists must be intimately involved with the issues and concerns of women. This includes documenting the conditions of women, advocating change, and ultimately conducting research and practising the profession to the end of helping women and children have a better quality of life. To accomplish long-lasting sustainable development, it is necessary to consider women's involvement in developing, administering, and evaluating the programmes being introduced to help them meet the challenges of their lives.

How to Rebuild Trust in Home Economics Education

The goal of home economics as a vocational subject is to equip students with all the pertinent practical knowledge and social skills necessary for them to take a productive role in the economy. A teacher of Home Economics education also has the sole responsibility of imparting this knowledge and skills to students in the subject area. The teacher implements the curriculum, motivates learning, facilitates learning, and guides learning in home economics for the benefit of the students and society. Nigeria as a nation has great human and material resources, but it is bedevilled by a number of problems such as underemployment, unemployment, poverty and rapid technological development. The wide spread of poverty, hunger, and unemployment is an enduring problem affecting an estimated 800 million people worldwide, and it is a factor responsible for at least five million deaths each year. Apparently, these problems are connected to the fact that learners are prepared for employment and not necessarily for job creation. Olaitan, Nwachuku, Oyemachi, Igbo, and Ekong (1999) opined that Home Economics has low effectiveness because the programme is not job-oriented but is based on the theoretical foundations of available textbooks and the teachers' background. As long as the majority of Nigerians remain without adequate knowledge and skills needed to develop the various sectors of the economy, unemployment and underdevelopment will prevail. The reality of the situation in our society today is that vocational subjects like Home Economics have not been able to attain this laudable goal of skilled manpower that provides self-employment.

Adequate competencies are needed by graduates of Home Economics in order to be self-employed. Competency is the successful performance of a task through the use of knowledge, skills, attitude, and judgement (Apple, 2015). Competency-based home economics education becomes more important with the need to reduce unemployment and promote self-employment. With competency-based home economics education, home economics students will become more competent and empowered. The competencies needed by students, when possessed and utilized, will help students become self-employed, so learning will be enhanced and poverty reduced. Home economists need to seek to identify competencies needed for improving the teaching and learning of home economics with the view to proffering suggestions that could improve the teaching and learning of home economics. However, trust in home economics education could be restored in the following ways:

- Adequately equipping home economics laboratory for effective learning
- Adequately employing home economics teachers in correct proportion to students.
- Adequately training and retraining teachers to meet up with the current advancement in home economics.
- Equipping students with all the pertinent practical knowledge
- Providing social skills necessary for them to be productive
- Impacting the knowledge and skills in the subject area into students
- Motivating learning by facilitating the learning of Home Economics

- Reorganizing Home Economics curriculum to have balance between knowledge and skills and values and ensure implementation of the curriculum.
- Training students to become self-employed
- Proffering suggestions that can improve the teaching and learning of Home Economics

Methods

The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. Needs assessment survey research design was adopted for the study with the population comprising of all home economics experts in Akwa Ibom State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) home economists from each of the three senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State which gave the total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents that constituted the sample size used for the study. The Instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Home Economics Education and National Development Questionnaire” (HEENDQ). Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test measurement and evaluation from University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness and completeness for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.80 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics for answering the research questions while regression analysis was used in testing the hypothesis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results and discussion

Research Questions 1:

The research question sought to find out the challenges faced in home economics as a practice. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 1).

Table 1: Percentage analysis of the challenges faced in home economics as a practice

NEEDS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Lack of finance	45	30**
Inadequate teachers	12	8
Lack of well-equipped laboratories	43	28.67
Inappropriate and ineffective method of teaching	9	6
Lack of control over the attitude of students and teachers	7	4.67*
Poor management of school	34	22.67
TOTAL	150	100%

** The highest percentage frequency

* The least percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the challenges faced in home economics as a practice. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (30%) of the respondents affirmed that “lack of finance” is the challenge faced in home economics as a practice, while the least percentage (4.67%) of the respondents stated that the challenge faced in home economics as a practice is lack of control over the attitude of students and teachers. The results agree with the findings of Dhamdhere (2015), who stated that there are various common challenges to home economics such as in the table above.

Research Questions 2:

The research question sought to find out the extent to which Home Economics has contributed to national development. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 2).

Table 2: Percentage analysis of the extents to which Home Economics has contributed to national development

EXTENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
VERY HIGH EXTENT	89	59.33**
HIGH EXTENT	34	22.67
LOW EXTENT	19	12.67
VERY LOW EXTENT	8	5.33*
TOTAL	150	100%

** The highest percentage frequency

* The least percentage frequency

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 2 presents the percentage analysis of the extents to which Home Economics has contributed to national development. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (59.33%) of the respondents affirmed that the extent to which Home Economics has contributed to national development is very high, while the least percentage (5.33%) of the respondents stated that the extent to which Home Economics has contributed to national development is very low. Moreover, Home Economics education has contributed to the national development in the following ways: by providing knowledge and skills which can be used by families to improve living conditions, improving household technology in order for women to have opportunities to earn a living, campaigning for the recognition of the value and capabilities of women, assisting children, youth and adults especially the women to learn better skills, rendering appropriate training in the knowledge and skills geared towards international competitiveness and sustainable development, empowering women, and demanding their rights as citizens to economic security through productive activities. The results agree with the findings of Matsushima, (1989) who stated that home economics enter into the change process by facilitating progress and as the change agent vibrant with life and energy, lends impetus to promote and accelerate change for progress as well as performing the above functions.

Research Questions 3:

The research question sought to find out the strategies that could be used to rebuild trust in Home Economics Education. To answer the research question, percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 3).

Table 3: Percentage analysis of the strategies that could be used to rebuild trust in Home Economics Education

STRATEGY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Adequately equipping home economics laboratory for effective learning	23	15.33
Adequately employing home economics teachers in correct proportion to students	21	14
Adequately training and retraining teachers to meet up with the current advancement in home economics	26	17.33**
Equipping students with all the pertinent practical knowledge	17	11.33
Providing social skills necessary for them to be productive	11	7.33
Impacting the knowledge and skills in the subject area into students	14	9.33
Motivating learning by facilitating the learning of Home Economics	6	4
Reorganizing Home Economics curriculum to have balance between knowledge and skills and values and ensure implementation of the curriculum	9	6
Training students to become self-employed	19	12.67
Proffering suggestions that can improve the teaching and learning of Home Economics	4	2.67*
TOTAL	150	100%

**** The highest percentage frequency**

*** The least percentage frequency**

SOURCE: Field survey

The above table 3 presents the percentage analysis of the strategies that could be used to rebuild trust in Home Economics Education. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (17.33%) of the respondents affirmed that the strategy that could be used to rebuild trust in Home Economics Education is by adequately training and retraining teachers to meet up with the current advancement in home economics, while the least percentage (2.67%) of the respondents stated that the strategy that could be used to rebuild trust in Home Economics Education is by

proffering suggestions that can improve the teaching and learning of Home Economics. The results agree with the findings of Apple, (2015) that stated that home economist need to seek to identify competencies needed for improving teaching and learning of Home Economics with the view to proffering suggestions that could improve the teaching and learning of Home Economics and ensure restoration trust of Home Economics Education in the manner found in the above table.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of national development is to improve the well-being of individuals and bestow benefits on all through self-reliance and mobilisation of domestic resources, the transformation of rural production structures, the development of small-scale industries, and the acquisition of technological and scientific skills. Development is associated with modernization, material advancement, industrialization, scientific and technological progress, the emergence of nuclear energy, the electronic and biological revolution, and new knowledge about man and the universe. Home economics education contributes to the development of individuals and families as functioning units of society. In addition, home economics prepares students to use entrepreneurial skills, accept challenges, adjust and adapt in a climate of change, experiment and use creativity, make informed judgments, and apply reasoned action to practical life situations.

Recommendations

1. Challenging environment that will serve as an impetus for competency and skills improvement by students and teachers of home economics should be created and sustained by the Federal Government through tertiary institutions.
2. There is need to reorganize Home Economics curriculum to have balance between knowledge and skills and values, so that the curriculum become competency based.
3. Soft loans should always be given to Home Economics students on graduation by banks and the government should enable them establish small scale enterprise.

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