

**FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST THE CHOICE OF HOME ECONOMICS AMONG SENIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS DURING EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS IN ENUGU
STATE**

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Abstract

This study investigated factors militating against the choice of Home Economics among senior secondary school students during external examinations in Enugu State. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Population size consisted of 3, 450 SS II students and 25 Home Economics teachers. A sample of 210 SS II students were selected randomly while the entire population of 25 Home Economics teachers were chosen, making it 235 sample size. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Findings revealed among others that the cause of low choice of Home Economics among senior secondary school students during external examinations included lack of laboratory, poor image of Home Economics, poor laboratory facilities, lack of fund and so on. Findings also showed that the responsibilities of teachers in promoting the choice of Home Economics among students included organizing workshops and seminars for teachers mastering of subject-matter, teacher going for on-the-job training. Findings also indicated that releasing funds, rewarding teachers, providing, laboratory facilities and equipment are ways school and government can promote the choice of Home Economics among students. Conclusions were made. The researcher recommended generally that the Home Economics teachers, school authority and government at different levels should perform their roles to promote the choice of Home Economics among students for improved society.

Keywords: Students, choice, Home Economics, Secondary School, External Examinations.

Introduction

Home Economics is a profession and a disciplinary field of study that deals with careful management of both human and material resources to enhance the lives of individuals and families in an ever changing world. It is a field that spans throughout human endeavors that helps individuals to be self-reliant. In view of this, Oshio, Nwike, and Onyia (2014), defined Home Economics is an area of study which helps students who are potential future homemakers, run their fulfilled family lives appropriately, by so doing, it makes them self-reliant, thus making the world a better place to live. Flecks (2010), supported this by adding that Home Economics helps families and individuals to identify needs, makes decisions and utilize resources to improve their quality living. Haapala, Cederberg and Kosonen (2014), defined it as a field of knowledge with remarkable skills that makes for self-reliance and self-employment.

Home Economics as a multi-disciplinary field of study helps individuals to adapt to changes- social, economic, technological changes and so on. Nwabunne and Madiche (2015) supported this by defining Home Economics as an interdisciplinary field of study which helps families and individuals to understand and adopt to the effects of social, economic, cultural and technological changes. It is an inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary body of knowledge (MC Gregor 2011). Anyakoha, (2013), defines

it as a borderless multi-disciplinary family-oriented profession that is continuously evolving new ways of enabling families to:

- take charge of their lives,
- maximize their potential,
- function independently and interdependently.

She added that Home Economics is a unique, creative and integrated approach that draws knowledge from many disciplines, to form its own body of knowledge.

As a teaching subject, Home Economics is offered at different levels of education - primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In Nigeria, Home Economics is offered as an integrated subject at the Primary and Junior Secondary school (JSS) levels (Basic Levels). At the Senior Secondary School (SSS) and Tertiary levels, it is compartmentalized and offered as different broad subjects; food and nutrition, Home management and clothing and textiles that is for Senior Secondary School levels, but at tertiary level; other broad subjects as child development and care, and others are included. These subjects as they are offered at Senior Secondary School level are written in external examinations like West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB) to get O' level certificate as basic prerequisites for entrance into tertiary institutions.

Moreover, these subjects as the areas of Home Economics possess lots of importance and relevance to individuals, families and the entire community. It is a skill oriented field of study that equips learners with skills that makes for self-reliance and self-employment. It aims at improving family life, and the family is very important in every nation. Every member of the society comes from one family or the other. Hence the family is the smallest unit of the society. Since Home Economics' main concern is for the well-being of family members, it therefore becomes pertinent that the subject be offered by great number of students to help improve the condition of the society. Home Economics helps to address the issues that impact positively on the family by addressing the challenges of the family. Some of these challenges as family poverty, Economic insecurity, Globalization, ICT, Dual- Location families, HIV/AIDS pandemic, Environmental challenges and so on. According to Anyakoha (2013), these challenges in one way or the other have thrown the family off balance and created a lot of family crises. Home Economics in many ways has propounded solutions to most of these issues by coming up with innovations and coping strategies. It does these by:

- creating skills, problem solving and entrepreneurial opportunities,
- evolving enterprises out of problems. That is turning problems into opportunities thereby being job creators and not job seekers,
- stimulating entrepreneurial spirit in the students and equips them with appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills to create job for themselves and others,
- promoting self-employment and alleviating poverty

For education and training, in the words of Anyakoha (2015), Home Economics is offered at all levels of formal and informal education with varying levels of depth and complexity. At each level, the curriculum is made robust and appropriately designed to prepare individuals (youths and adults) to manage themselves, as well as their personal and family resources, to identify needs, set goals, apply resources, solves problems, and attain goals and evaluate results. Home Economics graduates are also effective resource managers and home managers/homemakers. The three areas that make Home Economics at senior secondary school level have played significant roles in the life of individuals including students. Food and Nutrition according to Anyakoha (2017), deals with the study of food processing, preservation, preparation, meal management and service. It also prepares students for employment in food and nutrition related jobs. Clothing and Textiles which deals with textiles, designing and sewing of clothes has great importance to students. Chidume and Igbo (2012), added that clothing and textiles is designed to provide students with skills needed for fabric composition, clothing selection, home sewing and mending, clothing design and production, personal hygiene, good grooming and prepares them for working in textile and clothing industries or related jobs. Home management for Anyakoha (2017), equips the students with knowledge, skills that are necessary for effective management of the home and to wisely use those things which the family has, to obtain things needed

by the family. It also provides students with Home management related jobs. Home Economics helps in preparing students for future careers in order to adapt to changing economic times and technological situations (Oshio et al, 2014). Other areas of Home Economics like Child Development and Care, Consumer Education, Garment making, catering craft practice and so on have created a lot of positive impacts on the lives of individuals. Home Economics course areas include vocational subjects and are included in the National Policy on Education (NPE) to be studied at the Senior Secondary School levels (NPE 2011, 2013).

Senior Secondary School education according to the new National Policy on Education is part of the new 9-3-4 system of education (NPE, 2013). At this level of education, learners are exposed to various vocations and trades which they will study at tertiary institutions. Education at this level if not well managed, according to Oshio et al (2014) could lead to the failure of the whole purpose of education. That is why Awanbor, (2014), suggested that teachers should be properly prepared during their trainings to meet with the challenges of parents and public in all areas of learning which includes Home Economics and which can prepare one for varied occupations and skills.

Regrettably, despite the numerous importance and benefits of Home Economics in our society, Senior Secondary School students find it not too convenient as their choice of subject during external examinations like WAEC, NECO and NABTEB. There are however some factors preventing them from choosing Home Economics course during these examinations. These include lack of Laboratory facilities as stated in Ewubare (2010) in Oshio (2014). The lacks of Laboratory facilities compel Home Economics teachers to use inappropriate teaching methods. Inadequate funding was also pointed out by Ewubare (2010) has affected the teaching and learning of Home Economics. Other factors include poor image of the subject in the society that Home Economics is all about cooking and serving foods. This poor image is a value judgment which is transmitted to use by others. People influence the other with their attitudes and perceptions and a times we reason alongside with them because of personal influence. In addition, Home Economics as a subject has so many contents to cover, but lacks the space for practical, to mention but a few.

Students lack interest in Home Economics courses as it is noticed that very few of them register them during examinations. This study therefore sought to find out the causes of low choice of Home Economics courses during external examinations and proffer solutions to the problems.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate factors militating against the choice of Home Economics among Senior Secondary School Students during external examination in Enugu State. Specifically, the Study determined:

- i. Causes of low choice of Home Economics among Secondary School Students in examinations.
- ii. Responsibilities of teachers in promoting the choice of Home Economics in examination.
- iii. Ways school/government can promote the choice of Home Economics in examination.

Research Questions

- i. What are the causes of low choice of Home Economics among senior secondary school students in examination?
- ii. What are the responsibilities of teachers in promoting the choice of Home Economics in examination?
- iii. In what ways can school/government encourage the choice of Home Economics during examination

Hypothesis.

The following null hypothesis was formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students on the choice of Home Economics in external examinations.

Methodology

Design of the study: The study adopted descriptive survey design.

Area of the study: The study was carried out in Enugu State; there are Six Education Zones in Enugu State. This study was carried out in Obollo Education Zone. Obollo Education Zone was chosen because of proximity to the researcher.

Population for the study: The population for this study comprised of SSII students and Home Economics Teachers in the 49 public secondary schools in Obollo Education zone of Enugu State. There are 3,450 SSII students and 25 Home Economics teachers in the 49 public secondary schools in Obollo Education Zone (PPSMB Obollo Afor).

Sample and Sampling Techniques: A sample size of 210 SSII students were randomly selected from 14 secondary schools selected randomly out of then 49 public secondary schools in Obollo Education zone. The size of Home Economics teachers was small (25) thus, the entire population (25) was chosen. The total number of respondents for this study was 235.

Instrument for data collection: A structured questionnaire titled Factor Militating Home Economics Questionnaires (FMHEQ) was used. It has two parts A and B. Part A sought for demographic information while B was drawn on four point scale rating as Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed(A), Disagreed (D) strongly Disagreed (SD). Three Home Economics Lecturers validated the instrument.

Reliability of the instrument: Trial testing was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument using 48 students from selected schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. Thereafter, Cronbach Alfa was used in determining the internal consistency of the instrument and it yielded a coefficient index of 0.82 which was considered positive and appropriate for the study.

Method of Data collection: The two hundred and thirty five (235) copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the aid of four research assistants in their various schools. An agreed data for collection was made between the researcher/assistants and the respondents. Out of the two hundred and thirty five (235) copies of questionnaire distributed two hundred and ten 210 copies were returned showing 89% return rate.

Method of Data Analysis: Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Any mean ratings with 2.50 and above were considered as positive and accepted while any mean ratings less than 2.50 were regarded as negative and rejected.

Findings

Table 1: Mean and standard Deviation scores of the Respondents ratings on causes of low choice of Home Economics among Students during external examinations.

S/N		Mean	SD	Remark
1	Lack of Laboratories	3.00	0.93	Agreed
2	Poor Facilities in the laboratories	2.75	0.86	Agreed
3	Lack of professionals and experienced teacher	2.88	0.92	Agreed
4	The general misconception that the subject is for dull students	3.02	0.85	Agreed
5	Government not providing equipment and funds	3.09	0.01	Agreed
6	Home Economics lesson is always boring	3.89	1.03	Agreed
7	Many students feel that Home Economics is an easy subject that is reserved for female students.	3.89	1.03	Agreed
8	Lack of fund from school authorities to carry out development programmes in Home Economics	2.87	0.90	Agreed
9	Teacher do not explain concept very well during teaching	3.84	1.02	Agreed
10	In most cases, the students bear the cost for practical.	3.76	0.94	Agreed
11	Students are not duly informed on the importance of Home Economics by their teachers.	2.92	0.86	Agreed

Table 1: reveals that all the items highlighted were agreed upon as causes of low choice of Home Economics among senior students during external examinations. They all had mean value ranging from 2.75 to 3.90. The standard deviations of the responses range from 0.86 to 1.05 implying that the opinions of the respondents were not far from each other.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores of the respondents' ratings on the responsibility of teachers in promoting the choice of Home Economics among students during external examinations

S/N		Mean	SD	Remark
1	Having the knowledge of subject-matter at each lesson	3.03	0.90	Agreed
2	Making correct use teaching methods	4.00	1.06	Agreed
3	Creating awareness on the importance of home economics	3.90	0.99	Agreed
4	Rewarding students appropriately	3.02	0.99	Agreed
5	Attending workshops and seminars on Home Economics courses	3.00	1.02	Agreed
6	Using teaching aids while teaching	3.98	1.04	Agreed
7	Making use of improvisation while teaching aids are not available.	3.85	1.02	Agreed
8	Using extension programs	2.75	0.83	Agreed
9	Organizing exhibition where Home Economics products and services can be displayed.	2.69	1.01	Agreed
10	Organizing excursion for the students	2.90	8.04	Agreed

Table 2 indicates that the ten items were agreed upon by the respondents as the responsibilities of teachers in promoting the choice of Home Economics among secondary school students during external examinations. Their mean ratings range from 2.69 to 4.00 which was above the cut off point of 2.50. The standard deviation of the respondents ranges from 0.83 to 1.06. This indicates that the respondents had

similar responses. Research question 3: In which ways can School/ government promote the choice of Home Economics among Secondary school students during external examination?

Table 3: Mean response on the ways school/government can promote the choice of Home Economics among senior secondary school students during external examination

S/N		MEAN	SD	REMARK
1	Sending teachers for workshop	3.96	1.06	Agreed
2	Providing materials for teaching	3.71	0.88	Agreed
3	Principal head of schools showing interest in subject	3.11	0.80	Agreed
4	Sending teachers for seminars	3.20	0.69	Agreed
5	Organizing Career day	3.15	0.78	Agreed
6	Motivating teachers and students	3.21	0.72	Agreed
7	Encouraging teachers by releasing funds for practical	3.40	0.97	Agreed
8	Sending teachers for on the Job training	3.85	1.01	Agreed

Table 3 shows that all the items were accepted as ways school can promote the choice of Home Economics among senior Secondary schools in external examinations. Their mean ratings and standard deviations range from 3.11 to 3.96 and 0.80 to 1.06 respectively. This shows that the mean responses were not far from each other.

Discussion of Findings:

Findings from table 1 reveal that some causes of the low choice of Home Economics among secondary school students included lack of laboratories, poor laboratory equipment, lack of funds for practical Non-availability of teaching/learning aids, the general misconception that the subject is easy and is dull and female students. This is in agreement with Oshio and Nwike (2014), that Home Economics has some limitations which include lack of laboratory facilities thereby compelling Home Economics teachers in using inappropriate method of teaching. The findings also align with Anyakoha (2013), which stated that for effective Home Economics instruction, well-equipped laboratory is needed in every school. The students also should be encouraged by sending them for excursion for exploring new platforms of knowledge.

Findings from table 2 indicate the responsibilities of teachers in promoting the choice of Home Economics among students include: having the knowledge of subject matter, making correct use of teaching methods, creating awareness on the importance of Home Economics, attending workshops and seminars, making use of teaching aids and improvisation, rewarding students and organizing excursion

Findings of Table 3 that government should organize workshops and seminars for teachers, principals should show interest in the subject, career day should be organized, government should motivate teachers, government should as well release funds for practical and that teachers should go for on-the job training are all agreed as ways school/ government can promote the choice of Home Economics among senior secondary school students during external examinations. This is in line with the work of Nwaokaomoah (2010), that workshops and seminars should be encouraged in Home Economics courses so as to update the knowledge of the teachers and equip them with new trends in equipment and machines.

Conclusion

The study investigated factors militating against the choice of Home Economics among senior secondary school students in Enugu State. The study revealed that lack of laboratories, Poor laboratory equipment, poor image of the subject, lack of professionals and so on are causes of low choice of Home Economics among students during external examinations. Knowledge of subject matter, correct use of teaching methods, creating awareness on the importance of Home Economics to mention but a few are responsibilities of teachers in promoting the choice of Home Economics. Workshops and seminars, on the

job training, releasing funds, motivating teachers and others are ways school and government can promote the choice of Home Economics during external examinations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should support the activities of Home Economics by releasing funds and providing facilities.
2. Curriculum planners should include Home Economics courses as compulsory subjects having seen the importance.
3. There should be constant sponsored workshops and seminars for training and re-training of Home Economics teachers.
4. School Authorities should encourage Home Economics courses by allowing exhibition programmes in schools where products of Home Economics can be displayed.
5. Students should be rewarded appropriately by the teachers to encourage them.

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