

The Need for Reformation of Home Economics Education Curriculum for Entrepreneurial Skills Among Nigerian Youth

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Abstract: *Nigeria being amongst the developing countries, need to adopt some certain curriculum reformation in home economics education as an efficient tool for vocational skills acquisition at all educational levels for national youth development. This paper presents the concept of reformation, curriculum, entrepreneurial skills and home economics education. The need for reformation of home education curriculum was highlighted. It was concluded that Nigerian youth have not learnt sufficient entrepreneurial skills to allow for self-employment. Recommendations were given among others, for adequate implementation of a well-articulated skill oriented curriculum in home economics education.*

Keywords: Reformation, Home Economic Education, Entrepreneur, Curriculum.

Introduction

Education is the total process of developing human ability and behavior. An educational populace is of great importance to every nation. Increased awareness, economic growth and technological advancement are made possible through education. In other words, education is considered by many as an agent of human development, social mobility and socio-economic development of any society. However, it is arguable that the type and quality of education a nation offers to its citizens is a function of the level of progression of that nation. Home Economics Education (HEE) especially, is at the frontline of Nigeria's response to major challenges (Bisalla and Adeyemi, 2016). According to Bisalla and Adeyemi (2016), education is an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development. It prepares learners for careers that are based in manual or practical activities and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation. In short, HEE is an education designed to develop occupational skills. It gives individual the skills to live, learn and work as productive citizen in a global society. Unfortunately, despite all the glaring benefits of HEE in our nation, Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) opined that, Nigeria is yet to accord the type of education the attention it deserves. Education is entirely a dynamic system and therefore requires continuous review in order to address contemporary issues and challenges. This therefore implies that, review of HEE curriculum at all levels is of paramount importance if the economy of Nigeria is to reasonably reform to an enviable position.

Reformation is an improvement in the existing form or condition of institutions or practices. It is intended to make a striking change for the better in social and political affairs. Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (2000) stated that, in Nigeria policy changes in the education curriculum. Objective changes in the education sector, on the other hand, it includes inculcation of national consciousness, unity, and acquisition of appropriate skills. The content of the curriculum has to be reformed so that it would gear towards achieving the set objectives of Home Economics Education curriculum.

Curriculum according to Aliyu and Aliyu (2012) is a broad term that covers experience passed on to learners under the school. It is total experiences of all stakeholders that are used in educating young people. The curriculum of schools have witnessed marked transformation over the years. This dynamism according to Waziri (2012) has been in response to two major forces. First is the need to relevance to the Nigerian society. The second force consisted of changes in the disciplinary knowledge, where knowledge explosion appear on the scene of new technologies and changes in subject matter moved boundaries and content of the discipline in new direction.

Following the political independence of Nigeria, there was a realization that the type of education our colonial masters left with us needed a critical re-examination of the worth: of content, objectives, relevance, methods, administration, evaluation, and so forth. According to Ezeobata (2007), this period saw a state of affairs in Nigerian education where every subject had to 'prove its usefulness' to retain a place in the school curriculum. This was said to have led the then National Educational Research Council (NERC) to convey a historic curriculum conference at Lagos in 1969. This conference recommended new set of goals and provided directions for major curriculum revision upon which the National Policy on Education of 1977 and the revised policy in 1981 and 2004 were based.

Against this background of national aspirations, a new educational system commonly referred to as the 6-3-3-4 system of education emerged. The system consisted of six years of primary school education, three years of junior secondary school (JSS), three years of senior secondary school (SSS), and four years of post-secondary education (Omotayo, Ihebereme, & Maduemesi, 2008). The implementation of the 6-3-3-4 education system in Nigeria began in 1982 and brought many reforms into the educational system in Nigeria. Among the innovations is the vocationalization of the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. At the junior secondary level pre-vocational subjects were introduced into the curriculum while vocational subjects were introduced into the senior secondary level. The focus of the prevocational was to expose students at the junior secondary school level to the world of work through exploration. Such exposure would enable junior secondary school students make intelligent career choice. Among the pre-vocational subjects are practical Agriculture, Home Economics, and Business Studies. Fafunwa (2002) stated that the specific objectives of the Junior Secondary School Education are to develop in the students' Manipulative skills invention, respect for dignity of labor and above all healthy attitude towards things. At the senior secondary level, recommended vocational /technical subjects include: Agricultural Science, Clothing and Textile, Home Management, Food and Nutrition, Typewriting & Shorthand, Principles of Accounts, Commerce, Woodwork, Technical Drawing, Basic Electronics, Building Construction, Applied Electricity and Auto Mechanics.

The most significant aspect of the National Policy on Education as noted by Dike (2009) is the new focus it gives to Nigerian educational system, the need for the Industrialization of the nation in which HEE play crucial roles and the realization to change from white collar job oriented educational system to prepare individuals to be self-reliant and useful to the society. Igwe (2007) stated that the most important thing that ever happened to Nigeria is the 1981 National Policy on Education, which emphasizes the acquisition of vocational skills and self-reliance. Offorma (2005) lamented the growing dependence of our youth on white-collar jobs which are difficult to come by these days. Job employers, according to Offorma (2005), do not emphasize certificates but what one can do and urged youth to seek self-reliance through vocational education on entrepreneurial skills.

Vocational-technical education which comprised of home economics and other courses listed above is that aspect of education that gives its recipients an opportunity to acquire practical skills as well as some basic scientific knowledge Nigerian National Policy on education, (2004). HEE being a vocational education is regarded as that aspect of education, which provides the recipients with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self-employed (Oni 2007). The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2010) noted that revitalizing this important sector is among the ways to improve economic opportunities for the youth. From the foregoing, it is well recognized that HEE remains the key to achieving economic empowerment and national development.

Concept of Entrepreneurship and Home Economics Education

Entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into actions and is a key competence for all, helping young people to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake (Olaitan, 2008). Usman (2012) defined entrepreneurship as the process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision to life. On the other hand, a man who creates ventures from his/her own ideas and hardwork is referred to as an entrepreneur (Emeka, 2004).

The functions of an entrepreneur were stated by Garba and Kazeem (2006) as follows:

- He/she is the innovator of the idea of the business
- He/she determines the need of the consumers
- He/she organized the resources (human and materials)
- He/she bears all the risks of the business
- He/she makes all decision relating to profit, cost, benefit, analysis and size of the business.

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE, 2008), sees entrepreneurship as more than a job or career, it is a lifestyle and certain principles may influence one's career strategy for being an entrepreneur.

Home Economics Education is a vocational subject that contributes to development by equipping individuals with reliable occupational skills which lead to self-reliance. Home Economics Education prepares youths and adults for entering into various areas of Home Economics occupation (Iyere and Anene, 2017). It is skill oriented; it is a vocation of self-reliance and boarder on preparing her recipient for challenges of the home and its environment (Zongoro and Msheliza, 2018). It is a subject that passes knowledge and skills from the grass root home/family. The knowledge and skills which Home Economics provides can be thought in school formally organized or even in a non-formal setting. An individual involved in skills acquisition can become self-reliant and employer of labor (Gamawa, 2015).

Ibrahim (2008) stated that, Home Economics Education is the greatest investment any nation can make for the development of her economy, political, social and human resources. Its objectives are geared towards equipping individuals with saleable skills that will make them self-reliant. It exposes individuals to many occupational skills that can enable them gain employment in the labour market. Ibrahim (2008) further emphasized that Home Economics education is the study of all the elements of family, individual, human development and interpersonal relation. It is a field of study that provides the necessary knowledge for guiding and assisting human beings towards a more self-rewarding and fulfilled life comparable with their society. Home Economics Education is to assist young ones and interested adults to take a dynamic step which not only cause them to acquire knowledge but the skills for making them self-reliant. HEE can be effectively used for economic empowerment which if properly used can help raise the economic status of the individual, the family and the nation (Alabi, 2006). It enhances a nation's

standard of living by creating wealth and jobs, encouraging the development of new knowledge and technology which is the goal of every nation in the world. Home Economics Education can therefore be regarded as a tool for entrepreneurial skills among youth.

Reformation of Home Economics Education Curriculum

HEE in Africa differs from one country to another and is delivered at different levels by different types of institutions and apprentice training centres (African Union, 2007). In Nigeria, traditional apprenticeship particularly offers the largest opportunity for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in the informal sector than in the formal sectors. HEE system is school-based. According to Ariyo (2015), the socio-economic environment and the contextual frame in which the HEE delivery systems currently operate in Nigeria are characterized by the following:

1. **Curricula Development and Implementation:** Expert in curriculum development agrees that curriculum review is necessary every five years. It is therefore incumbent on stakeholders of education especially HEE to urgently look at the current in HEE for necessary reformations and inputs where the need arises. Skill oriented curriculum as is what Nigerian education of the 21st century should aspire for just as seen in countries like Japan and Asian Tigers (Okoye, Mokobia, & Atomatofa, 2013).
2. **Poor Perception of HEE:** The general perception about HEE is that, it is meant for those who are academically less endowed. The curriculum of Home Economics Education should emphasize that learners are capable to compete favorably in anywhere in the world in terms, skills, techniques, values and aptitudes.
3. **Poor state of infrastructure and training Equipment:** The infrastructure and equipment are in a bad state. Most of the laboratories do not have facilities at all and where they exist, they are obsolete and are inadequate. Ariyo (2015), suggested for reformation of HEE curriculum.
4. **Inadequate Financing:** The subvention given to institutions is grossly inadequate. HEE is said to be expensive per student basis and unit costs are higher in higher institution than in primary and secondary schools. Other factors that contribute to this are expensive training equipment and costly training materials that are used during practical lessons. There is also need for increase in the subventions given to institutions.
5. **Low Quality Training:** Quality of training is low with more emphasis on theory and certification rather than skill acquisition and proficiency testing (Aworanti, 2015). Teachers should therefore be sent for refresher training course in entrepreneurial skills (Kwala and David, 2007).

To overcome the challenges facing Home Education Curriculum as identified above, Igbokwe (2018) suggested for the reformation of the Home Economics Education philosophy and structure of the curriculum in Nigeria with particular emphasis on Entrepreneurial skill acquisition to make the youths Entrepreneurs and self-employed.

The Need for Home Economics Education and the Curriculum in Promoting Entrepreneurial Skills among Youth

Nigeria is a mono-economic nation with its economy heavily depended on petroleum revenue, the situation has led to non-development of other sectors of the economy, and this has exposed the nation to economic instability (Anyaeachie and Areji, 2015). Home Economics education is loaded with a lot of diversify skills that can be acquired by an individual for revamping Nigerian economy. The level of illiteracy in Nigeria is high. This is attributed to cultural, religious and economic factors that affect their participation into educational programs. Literacy classes can be organized for those who have not gotten the opportunity to formal education where they can be thought vocational skills such as sewing, knitting, weaving, mat making, tie and dye, jewelries production, soap and pomade making and family life education (Kwala and David, 2007).

Home economics education curriculum provides the necessary balance in bringing together theoretical understandings and addressing everyday problems practically. It contributes to empowering people to become active and informed members of society with respect to both living independently and living in caring situations with other people. Youths can develop an understanding of the interdependence of their everyday living with that of other human beings and broader issues related to ecological sustainability (Pendergast, 2001).

Home economics provides learning contexts in selecting, preparing, cooking and serving food to ensure the empowerment of individuals and families to make informed choices in their lives in the most basic ways. Home economics teaches individuals the importance of critical and reflective thinking about social issues towards enabling optimum health, focusing on how youths can be empowered both individually and collectively. In this way the youths can take control of their lives in both paid and unpaid spheres, removing their dependence from others (Pendergast, 2001).

According to Okafor (2011), Home economics learning experiences enable youths to develop competencies, making connections between their daily lives and their future world, and to strengthen their understanding of the interconnectedness of dependence, independence and interdependence within families and society.

Lemchi (2005) presented a comprehensive catalog of Home Economics related business opportunities (based on related content areas of Home Economics Education) as follows:

1. Clothing and textile related businesses:

These include: Garment construction/manufacturing; tailoring; fabric stores; apparel shops; laundry services; bridal shop; weaving centers; knitting centers; crocheting; costume design; pattern design and production; fashion and design school operations; tie and die designing; batik designing; children/kiddies clothing shops; clothes remodeling.

2. Food and nutrition related business: These include restaurant, fast food establishments, grocery shops, bakeries; cake designing; infants formula, food manufacturing, catering
Services (both indoor and outdoor) jam jellies and fruit juice making, ice cream and yoghurt making nutrition/diet counseling, candies and biscuits manufacture.
3. Child and Family Development related business: these include; day care centers; Nursery and kindergarten schools, kids amusement parks, kiddies clothing shops; kiddies toy Shops, variety kiddie's products distributors; children furniture shops; body silting.
4. Home management/Housing and furniture related business: These include; household equipment shops, Gift shops, Crafts shops, Craft production centers, Super markets, Abrasive production, Interior decoration, Bed sheets and pillow case making and merchandizing, Soap manufacturing, Cream and pomade manufacturing, Rental services
e.g. canopies, plates, cups, chairs, etc. for parties, outdoor decoration for parties, funeral house decoration, furniture shops.

It is clearly seen from the above that Home Economics offers numerous self-employment opportunities to individual. It can thus be rightly stated that Home Economics Education is a vital tool in diversifying the Nigerian economy if well implemented and knowledge and skills acquired are well utilized.

Conclusion

The study revealed that Nigerian youth have not learnt acquired entrepreneurial skills to allow for self-employment. The Nigerian educational system is expected to rise to the challenge of equipping the youth with the necessary entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, values and attitude for them to live as competent members of the society and contribute meaningfully to nation building. Reformation of HEE curriculum if considered and properly implemented will go a long way in creating reasonable number of entrepreneurs among our teeming unemployed youth.

Recommendations

1. Adequate implementation of a well-articulated skill-oriented curriculum by teachers of HEE will provide solution to the problem of poverty in Nigeria because the youths would have been taught some skills that could be used to create jobs for themselves
2. Students should be encouraged to have interest in the skill-based HEE, hence should be accorded appropriate recognition. There is need for a change in the mindset of youth to see self-employment as an option and be prepared psychologically and emotionally for it. This will enable them to be more motivated in identifying entrepreneurial opportunities.
3. With the recent emphasis on the need for youth self-employment, the Federal Government is equally expected to create the enabling environment that will promote entrepreneurship by ensuring constant power supply in the country, without this the young upcoming entrepreneurs will become discouraged.
4. Real practical work (and not alternative to practical) in HEE should be made compulsory for JSS 3 and SSS 3 students as part of the requirements for their graduation. Each student should be encouraged to produce at least one marketable product or service, and such products should be put up for exhibition. This will further create motivation for entrepreneurship
5. Teachers should be supported through continuous professional development and motivation to enable them prepare the youth for success in the competitive global economy

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