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ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES OF LEARNING HOME ECONOMICS IN PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
In order to successfully teach in this modern technological era, teachers of home economics must be highly innovative and flexible to changes. This study examined the challenges of learning home economics by junior secondary school students in public schools in Plateau State. A descriptive survey research design was used. The population for the study comprised 540 students and a sample of 180 from three senatorial zones of Plateau State. Four research questions were raised in line with the objectives of the study. A structured questionnaire was developed by the researchers for the purpose of data collection. Data wereanalyzed using descriptive statistics involving mean and standard deviation scores to answer the four research questions. The results revealed that secondary school teachers in the study area used the lecture(87%), questioning (70%) and demonstration (63%) teachingmethodsalways and sometimes while they used the other methods rarely.Majority of the respondents agreed that separate laboratory for home economics practicals; laboratory equipment and materials for practicals are not available and when available are not always functional. Many of the respondents had moderate perception of their home economics teachers. It was recommended that more qualified teachers, functional laboratories and more efficient equipment be made available in junior secondary schools in Plateau State for more effective teaching and learning of home economics.

Key words: Challenges, Home Economics, Analysis, Public Schools

Introduction

The capacity of development in any country can be measured through a properly planned and well directed education. Thus, education is a behavior characteristics.It impacts skills, attitudes, beliefs and knowledge which enables one to adjust and interact effectively with other individuals. Home Economics is one of the subjects in the Technology Education key learning Areas at junior secondary school level. Home Economics is an essential part of general education because it provides a vital contribution to the school common core curriculum with its concern for the personal development of an individual, the family and the community at large. It is an integrated field of study and it correlates with other subjects such as science, social studies and art (Mangvwat&Keswet,2010; Anyakoha, 2015). Home Economics is a practical and lively subject. It is mandatory for all junior secondary school students in Nigeria. Some of its major areas/options comprise: food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, home management, child or human development, consumer education and crafts (Keswet & Gisilambe, 2017).

Home economics as an area of education has achieved an enviable position, and researches in the field have made and continues to make lasting and significant contributions to the complex problems of living, and have prepared and are till preparing individuals for skilled and profitable

occupations, which enables them to make informed choices, whilst living healthy and happy lives (Anyakoha, 2015). The goals towards which most departments in schools strive to build an educationally sound programme, despite some of the challenges faced by students in learning new innovations in the ever changing technological era. The successful operation of Home Economics in any school has always put heavy demands on the school administrators in terms of qualified teachers, learning strategies and adequately equipped, up to date, laboratories (Okoli, 2006; Bruner, 2009; Babajide, 2010; Dembo, 2015;Keswet, Kazi & Salami, 2018). This is so because the school is one of the agents of education which transmits knowledge and values from one generation to another in order to realize the goals of the society.

The dominant focus of home economics education is the wellbeing of people within the context of their personal, family, community and work roles. Home economics education is about connecting with others and taking action towards preferred futures that support individual and family wellbeing (Anyakoha, 2015). That is why Illoeje, (2000) explained that home economics education is a strong tool for economic diversification as it is after skill oriented, a vocation of self-reliance that centers on preparing her recipients for challenges of the home and its environment.

From a curriculum perspective, home economics in schools is meant to foster positive attitudes and values for well-being of the families and society as whole, demonstrate good use of management and organizational skills in handling physical and socio-economic resources for self, family, community and society at large, with application of knowledge from food science and technology strand, fashion design, textiles and clothing, as well as implement strategies independently to solve complicated problems in technological contexts. Also to evaluate critically, the impact of social, cultural, economic, scientific developments on the well-being of individuals, families and society so as to develop personal and communal values in determining priorities for choice, among so many others. The importance of exposing learners to home economics curriculum for individual and societal development has been widely acknowledged by the government's policy document the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), Ministry of Education and Skill Development (2013), and by other renowned professionals of Home Economics and annual reports of the International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE, 2017, 2018) respectively. These documents all knowledge that skills gained with the subject make a considerable contribution to young people's personal and social development as well as prepare them for the world of work in a wide range of areas related to the subject. The acquisition of such knowledge and skill has the capacity to argument; inspire productivity and further income generating life endeavors among people, if innovatively done. Thus, a strong background in home economics curriculums for teaching and learning is crucial for many careers and job opportunities in today's technologically inclined society.

To accommodate the various multidisciplinary area and skills in home economics, and position it to prepare Nigerian students for global participation, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2008), reoriented its curriculum to have a broad scope that covers virtually all aspects of human daily living. According to the NERDC (2008), the reviewed upper basic home economics curriculum is built on the 9-year basic education philosophy that seeks to provide quality learning experiences and pay attention to the all-around development of the individuals. Thus, contemporary societal issues have been integrated in the curriculum with

more practical instructions which are organized in modules with specifications on a variety of instructional material including instructional technologies for teaching. Consequently, teachers of home economics must not only be knowledgeable in the various subject areas but must also be innovative in the transfer of such knowledge. It is expected that if appropriately implemented the curriculum would cater for a diverse range of students and help them to learn practical skills which would be useful to them in higher education or enable them get jobs in industries or other formal sectors of the economy.

Effective implementation of the home economics curriculum will require the use of good and relevant instructional materials specifically designed to fulfill the objectives in teaching/learning situation (Tiamiyu& Okonmah, 2008; Keswet, Yusuf& Kazi, 2018). This implies that teachers of home economics vary the methods of teaching/learning and utilizing instructional materials during teaching to effect changes in the behavior of the learners. Certainly the availability and appropriate use of instructional materials will go a long way in improving teaching and learning, arousing interest and enhancing student's affective responses. Hence, the effective teaching and learning of home economics for gainful purposes will need to take proper cognizance of the knowledge of modern teaching strategies, teachers' qualification and interest (Illoeje, 2000; Keswet, Gisilambe, 2017), in the subject area, availability of laboratories and other relevant teaching and learning materials. Through the acquisition of skills it enables an individual and the group to proceed into the actualization of an individual's vocation. That is why Illoeje, (2000) and Tiamiyu, Okonmah, (2008), advised that government should provide funds to school administrators who must be concerned with the monitoring of teaching and learning in Nigerian schools. Also, to provide and adequately use the available instructional resources. There are bundles of challenges to all these issues raised, hence, the purpose of this study.

Objectives of the study were to:

1. determine the challenges faced in the learning of home economics
2. find out methods of teaching used by Home Economics teachers
3. find out the perceptions of students on thetheir home economics teachers' methods of teaching
4. find out the perception of students about the facilities and equipment available for teaching and learning home economics

To achieve the objectives, the following research questions were raised.

Research questions

The study is aimed at addressing the following questions;

1. What are the challenges faced by students in learning home economics in schools?
2. What are the teaching methods used by the home economics teachers?
3. What is the perception of students on their home economics teachers' method of teaching?
4. What is the perception of students about the facilities and equipment used in learning home economics?

Method

The research design adopted was descriptive survey and inferential design in which a structured questionnaire was used to illicit information from the respondents based on the research

questions. The study was conducted using 180 Junior secondary school students representing 30% of the population.

The multi stage sampling technique was used to select the subjects for the study as follows:
All the three senatorial zones were selected for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select one Local Government Area (LGA) from each of the Senatorial Zones. The three LGAs selected were: Basss, Pankshin and Shendam respectively. A simple random sampling technique was used to select twelve public schools from each of the selected LGA, making 36 secondary schools.A purposive sampling technique was used to select 5 students offering Home Economics from each school, making a total of 180 students for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection
The instrument used for the data collection was a structured questionnaire called "Junior Secondary School Learning Innovation Questionnaire" (JSSLIQ), which was subjected to face and content validity by consulting experts in the field of Home Economics education. Test re-test was carried out at an interval of one week to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to establish reliability.

Method of Data analysis
Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the four research questions.

Results
Research Question 1
What are the challenges faced in the learning of home economics?

Table 1: Challenges facing the learning of Home Economics in JSS

s/n	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean ± SD
1	Lack of qualified Home Economics teachers	31 (25.8)	50 (41.7)	25 (20.8)	14 (11.7)	120 (100)	2.84±0.98
2	Lack of instructional materials	31 (25.8)	50 (41.7)	25 (20.8)	14 (11.7)	120 (100)	2.82±0.95
3	Lack of atleast one functional laboratory	33 (27.5)	29 (24.2)	40 (33.3)	18 (15.0)	120 (100)	2.64±1.04
4	Lack of relevant Home Economics textbooks in all subject areas	26 (21.7)	41 (34.2)	34 (28.3)	19 (15.8)	120 (100)	2.62±1.00
5	Lack of modern equipment for practical	21 (17.5)	40 (33.3)	39 (32.3)	20 (16.7)	120 (100)	2.50±1.00

Note: Percentages are in parenthesis (%)

Table 1 shows the challenges faced by Home Economics students in Junior Secondary schools in Plateau State.81 of the respondents agreed (67.5%) that there were no qualified teachers of Home

Economics in the various schools. They also agreed that the schools lacked instructional materials, functional Home Economics laboratories, relevant textbooks in the major subject areas and modern laboratory equipment for practicals with scores of 67.5%, 51.7%, 55.9% and 50.3% respectively. This implies that most public secondary schools in Plateau State lack qualified teachers, instructional materials, specific home economic laboratories and relevant textbooks for innovative teaching and learning of Home Economics Education.

Research Question 2
What are the teaching methods used by the home economics teachers?

Table 2: Teaching Methods Used By Home Economic Teachers in Plateau State

S/N	Teaching Method	Always	Sometime	Rarely	Not used	Total	Mean±SD
1	Lecture	50 (41.7)	54 (45.0)	13 (10.80	33 (27.50	120 (100)	2.68±1.35
2	Discussion	7 (5.80)	9 (7.50)	48 (40.0)	26 (21.7)	120 (100)	3.20±0.88
3	Demonstration	13 (10.80	64 (53.3)	4 (3.30)	39 (32.5)	120 (100)	3.35±0.81
4	Inquiry	24 (20.00	14 (11.70)	27 (22.5)	55 (45.8)	120 (100)	2.79±0.92
5	Field trip	32 (26.70	13 (10.80)	33 (27.5)	42 (35.0)	120 (100)	2.79±0.97
6	Questioning	53 (44.1)	31 (25.8)	24 (20.00	10 (8.30)	120 (100)	3.05±1.11
7	Team teaching	24 (20.00	9 (7.50)	43 (35.8)	44 (36.7)	120 (100)	3.02±0.94
8	Simulation/Games	26 (21.70	30 (25.00)	14 (11.70	50 (41.70	120 (100)	2.39±1.06
9	Drama/Role play	25 (20.80	22 (18.3)	30 (25.0)	43 (35.8)	120 (100)	2.67±1.06
10	Discovery	33 (27.50	12 (10.0)	36 (30.0)	39 (32.5)	120 (100)	2.83±0.98

Note: Percentages are in parenthesis (%),and Mean<1.9= Low Extent, 2.00 -3.50 = Moderate Extent, 3.60-4.00 = High Extent

Table 2shows the various teaching methods which could be used for the teaching of Home Economics in secondary schools inPlateau State. The respondents (104, 77 and 84) agreed that their teachers used the Lecture method (86.7%), Demonstration method (63.8%) and Questioning method (69.9%)always and sometimes. Also 46, 82, 75, 87, 64, 73 and 75 respondents respectively revealed that teachers rarely or do not use the discussion method (74%), Inquiry method (68.3), Field trips (62.5%), Team teaching (72.5%), simulation/games (53.4%), Drama (60.8%) and Discovery method (62.5%).This indicates that the teachers of Home Economics generally used the lecture, demonstration and questioning methodsto a high extent than all others listed on table 2.

Research Question 3
What is the perception of students on their home economics teachers' method of teaching and learning in Plateau state?

Table 3: Perception of Students on Their Home Economics Teachers' Method of Teaching and Learning

SN	Item	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Total**	Mean ±SD
1	My home economics teacher	10	8	64	38	120	3.33±0.7

professionally trained, be able to motivate students and useallor most of the modernteaching strategiesin their teaching.

Research Question 4
What is the perception of students' about the facilities and equipment available for teaching and learning of home economics in Plateau State?

Table 4: Students Perception on Facilities and Equipment in the Learning of Home Economics

S/N	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean ± SD
1	There is only one laboratory for all science practical's in my	47 (39.2)	37 (30.8)	18 (15.0)	18 (15.0)	120 (100)	2.94±1.07
2	There is a separate laboratory in my for home economics practicals	25 (20.8)	15 (12.5)	40 (33.3)	40 (33.3)	120 (100)	2.85±1.06
3	There is no laboratory in my for home economics practicals	22 (18.3)	22 (18.3)	38 (31.7)	38 (31.7)	120 (100)	2.21±1.13
4	Laboratory equipment and materials for practicals are not available	34 (28.3)	32 (26.6)	26 (21.7)	28 (23.3)	120 (100)	2.39±1.12
5.	Laboratory equipment and materials for practicals are available and adequate	22 (18.3)	23 (19.2)	23 (19.2)	52 (43.3)	120 (100)	2.61±1.04
6	There are at least2 equipped laboratories for major areas of specializations	22 (18.3)	23 (19.2)	24 (20.0)	51 (42.5)	120 (100)	2.62±1.03
7	Equipment in the home economics laboratory are always functional	37 (30.8)	18 (15.0)	33 (27.5)	32 (26.7)	120 (100)	2.62±1.06
8	Equipment in the home economics laboratory are not functional	30 (25.0)	41 (34.2)	22 (18.3)	27 (22.5)	120 (100)	2.61±1.11
9	The home economics laboratory has good lightings and functional air conditioners	32 (26.7)	11 (9.2)	33 (27.5)	44 (36.7)	120 (100)	2.67±1.13
10	Students always have to bring equipment from their homes for practical lessons	31 (25.8)	45 (37.5)	24 (20.0)	20 (16.6)	120 (100)	2.71±1.05
11	Adequate and comfortable classrooms are available for home economics lessons	28 (23.3)	26 (21.7)	26 (21.7)	40 (33.3)	120 (100)	2.55±1.06

Note: Percentages are in parenthesis (%)

Table 4 reveals the students perception on facilities and equipment in learning home economics. Based on the degree of agreement and disagreement, 84(70.0%) agreed while 36(30.0%) disagreed with the statement that there is only one laboratory for all science practical's in their schools, 66, 71 and 76 respondents agreed with scores of 54.9%, 60.2% and 63.3 respectively that modern laboratory equipment were not available, they were not functional where some were available and students had to bring equipment from their homes. Finally, 54 (45%) of the respondents agreed that there were no comfortable classrooms for practicals respectively. This implies that thereare no separate laboratories for practicals, laboratory equipment and materials for practical'sare not available or areinadequate, not always functional and there were no good lightings and functional air conditioners for home economics lessons.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study in table 1 revealed that Lecture, Questioning and Demonstration teaching methods are used to a high extent and others are used rarely or not used at all by home economics teachers in secondary schools in Plateau State. These findings are in line with the findings ofIlloeje, (2000), Keswet, Yusuf & Kazi (2018),who specified thateffective implementation of any curriculum will require the use of good and relevant instructional materials which are specially designed to fulfill objectives in teaching/learning situations. For the teaching of home economics to be effective, teachers must be vast in the use of teaching methods and utilizing instructional materials innovatively during their instructions.Researches in other science areas have also shown that teachers often use the Lecture method more readily than others (Ezeliora, 2014; Bello, 2011 & Dembo, 2015). Some of the suggested methods that can be innovatively used are student centered and include: problem-based learning, cooperative learning, puzzle games, inquiry based techniques and mind mapping (Okoli, 2006; Bello, 2011; Dembo, 2015).

The findings of the study in table 2 revealed that majority of the home economics studentshaveboth positive and negative disposition towardstheir home economics teachers teaching and learning. For example, they generally agreed that both male and female teachers can teach home economics if professionally trained.As long as they have mastery of the different subject areas of home economics (Mangvwat & Keswet, 2013; Anyakoha, 2013) an innovative male or female home economics teacher can change the behavior and attitude of their students positively (Dembo,2015).

Table 3 revealed that majority of the students agreed that separate laboratoryfor home economics practical's, laboratory equipment and materials for practical's are not available and when available are not always functional, the laboratories do not have good lightings and functional air conditioners, students always have to bring equipment from their homes for practical lessons. These findings are in agreement with the proposal of the Ministry of Education and Skill Development (2012) and the suggestions of Keswet, Kazi & Salome (2018), who explained that successful operation of Home Economics in schoolsusually put substantial demands on the school operators in terms of qualified manpower, teaching methods, learning strategies, and adequately equipped, up to date, laboratories.

On the challenges of learning home economics, table 4showed that majority of the students agreed that they lack qualified teachers and instructional materials, have general science laboratories and lack relevant home economics textbooks, among others. This finding is supported byBabajide, (2010), who

holds the view that government should provide funds to school administrators who monitors the teaching and learning in schools to provide and adequately use the instructional materials and methods.When all these requirements are available Home Economics Students in Plateau State should learn better and innovatively too, hence, producing skilled individuals that can be self-sustaining (Illoeje, 2000; Burner, 2009; International Federation of Home Economics IFHE 2018).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the challenges of learning Home Economics in public secondary schools reveals that they have peculiar challenges, and so there have to be serious commitment from teachers to apply meaningful teaching and learning processes which may increase student's active participation in class activities to develop students with higher level of thinking and learning skills. To achieve this goal,funds for schools, acquiring quality training facilities, research grants, decent teacher salary and welfare when released and spent properly will be of a great benefit to students and teachers of Secondary Schools in Nigeria and Plateau State specifically.

Recommendation

1. At least onewell-furnished home economics laboratory must be providedin secondary schools in plateau state in other to enhance the learning of practical skills.
2. Teachers of Home Economics must acquire higher professional training in all the major subject areas.
3. All teachers of home economics at various levels should innovatively create a good learning environment that is capable of motivating students to participate in lessons.

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