



HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of Home Economics Education as a tool for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. Sustainable development deals with balance consideration of environmental, social and economic constraints confronting human society. It focuses on economic expansion, capitalist neo-liberal political views and policies, and consumer consumption. The purpose of the study is to establish Home Economics Education as an integral and indispensable tool for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. The findings of the study unveil that there is a strong link between Home Economics Education and sustainable development. Home economics education as a tool for sustainable development provides opportunities for empowering students through capacity

building in decision-making, problem-solving, training for manpower in entrepreneurship to be self-reliant

KEYWORDS:

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Economics
Education,
Sustainable
Development

economically,
technically
knowledgeable and
vocationally skilful for
national development
that is paramount for
the realization of
sustainable
development in Nigeria.
It is also found that
teaching of home
economics equips young
people and adults with
sustainable skills, useful

<i>knowledge and good attitudes for work in any chosen occupation and career opportunities that gear towards sustainable development. Establishment of more vocational centres, provision of soft loan, and curriculum development in line with sustainable developments as well as training of teachers and lecturers were recommended by the</i>	<i>researcher to be implemented by government and Non-Governmental Organizations to facilitate speedily sustainable development in Nigeria..</i>
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Introduction

Education has been considered as the focal point for development in all ramifications. Education as a bedrock for development is a useful tool for sustainable development. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2017, education for sustainable development aimed at both holistic and transformational processes of developing an individual, communities, and society in general. These approaches pay much attention to learning content and outcomes, pedagogy, and the learning environment as well as empowers learners to make informed decisions and responsible actions, keeping in mind environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society both for present and future generations, as well as respecting cultural diversity.

Importantly, the national policy on education emphasizes the need for the inculcation of national consciousness and unity in diversity in the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, ability, skills, competence and self-reliance. Following this line of thought, Home economics is a vocational discipline that can easily achieve this fundamental goal of National policy on education. Home Economics improves the quality of family life through effective development and utilization of human, material and natural resources of society (Usman, 2010). This aim is important for sustainable development.

Home Economics is viewed as a useful tool for promoting sustainable development lifestyles (Syed and Akhter, 2018). Home Economics education is an indispensable tool for Sustainable Development. The roles can be viewed through the influences the values, attitudes and behaviours of students through development approaches. The purpose of this study is to establish Home Economics as a tool for sustainable development. Sustainable development can be enhanced through human activity at levels of individuals, communities, organizations, and societies. In this context, home economics Education approach is used here to link sustainable development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

Home Economics Education: The concept of Home Economics is not relatively new in educational discourse. This concept is a century-old discipline that first emerged in the USA and Canada, to highlight and professionalize the role of women as home managers (Renwick, 2015). The primary aim of the discipline has made many men conclude that it is “women’s profession.” In fact, Home Economics has channelized the hitherto unrecorded efforts of women into mainstream human activities. The author further argues that the role of Home Economics is well-recognized as an effective drive towards women’s inclusion in significant socio-political activities.

Home Economics as a field of education, according to Syed and Akhter (2018), has been advanced for teaching household skills alone towards a community development approach as well as equipping the students with management skills for small and medium entrepreneurship. Scholars like Pendergast (2009) and McGregor (2010) viewed Home economics as a scientific field that pays attention to human activities. These human activities include textile design, fashion design, interior design, clothing, food and beverage production and service. International Federation for Home Economics (2008) defined Home Economics Education as a “field of study and a profession situated in the

human sciences that draw from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities”. This points to the fact that Economics Education aimed at restructuring human society for a better living.

Sustainable Development: The concept of sustainable development has many definitions. Scholars have defined it in different perspectives. Scholars like Selby (2006) claims that the concept is an oxymoron as it can imply continued economic expansion, capitalist neo-liberal political views and policies, and consumer consumption. Similarly, McMichael (2008) viewed the concept as a balanced consideration of environmental, social and economic constraints facing society. However, the meaning of the concept has varied since its introduction to development discourse since the 1970s and 1980s (Ross, 2009). It is from this understanding that Jickling and Wals (2012) and Knutsson (2013) have concluded that the concept remains complicated and debated. According to Okpetu, et al (2002) the concept is viewed as the economy, which depends on the stock of natural capital, human capital and technology which the future generation inherits from the present generation. In this context, the concept is viewed as development that hinges on environment, society and economy.

Theoretical framework

This study adopts the Marxist Theory of Development championed by Karl Marx. The theory challenges the assumption that development must depend on western indices and First World countries. The theory argues that development is possible through the uplifting of society and structure determined by the interplay of the material resources of the environment (Katsina, 2012). In this context, Marxist Theory of Development is relevant to this study because it would provide fundamental premises for home economists to make use of the material resources that are available in the environment to facilitate sustainable development. This implies that Home Economics Education will offer

students useful knowledge that is relevant for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria.

The History of Home Economics Education in Nigeria

The history of Home Economics Education in Nigeria can be traced right from the pre-colonial era. Home Economics Education has existed informally among Nigerians long before the advent of western education. Knowledge acquired during the pre-colonial era was very slow and shallow. The purpose of the Home Economics Education was to train and prepare the young female child to handle effectively the chores expected in marriage and motherhood. The female child received early traditional lessons about the home from her mother and close relatives (Balogun, 2009).

Home Economics Education was, at that era, run through the apprenticeship system in which older female children were not trained as homemakers by their own mothers but by their close relatives or by experts in particular trades or skills such as preparation of traditional food delicacies, textile dyeing, cotton thread spinning, cloth weaving among others. In the pre-colonial era, girls were taught to become caring mothers and good housewives though the training was through observation and imitation of their mothers or older women in the community under their strict supervision. These girls were taught to take care of children, prepare acceptable family meals, wash clothes and household utensils, fetch water and keep their houses and surroundings clean (Balogun, 2009). This informal training makes the female child acquire the skills and the code of conduct they needed in preparation for their future roles as homemakers with wholesome personalities to enjoy happy human relationships in the community.

Home Economics Education was formally introduced in the country during the colonial era as Domestic Science. Domestic Science was introduced by Catholic Missionaries from France who arrived in Lagos in 1873. They started the St. Mary Convent School in Lagos, and Domestic

Science was one of the major subjects they had included in their curriculum. Laundry, needlework, knitting, child care, cookery, housekeeping, among others, were taught by these missionaries (Balogun, 2009).

The aim of the subject was to impart knowledge in preparation for good homemaking or in setting up a career, or better still, the combination of both. Burman (1999) argues that wives of pastors and clergymen were the first adults to benefit in receiving this training. Relatively, when the Queen's College, Lagos was established in 1927 the domestic science was also included in the school curriculum. The efforts of European women in education frontiers in Nigeria contributed immensely for Domestic Science in 1931 to gain Federal and Regional governments' recognition. Female European officers were appointed to look into Domestic Science in Ministries and to improve women education generally. By 1956 needlework, domestic science and handcrafts were included in the curriculum of Secondary Modern School of the old Western Region.

Home Economics Education was incorporated in West African School Certificate Syllabus and Grade II Teachers Training Colleges in the mid 1960s. This was facilitated by some secondary schools run by Christian Missions. 1962 marked the introduction of vocational training and guidance in primary and secondary schools by the Eastern Region. Cookery and Home Management was extended to be handled in all categories of primary schools especially Mission or Government-owned schools. The aim of introducing Home Economics Education at this level was to prepare and help girls to acquire necessary knowledge and skill for successful homemaking since most of the girls terminate their education pursuit for either marriage or seeking for a job in public or private service at primary school level (Kamminga 1998). It is important to note here that Domestic Science was replaced by Home Economics in 1960.

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka was the first in the country to run Home Economics at degree level. The entry qualifications into Home Economics

study in tertiary institutions have been reviewed to include the Physical Science, even as required for traditionally noble disciplines such as Medicine among others. Today, the scope of the discipline has been widening as well as creating an avenue for careers and professionalism.

Home Economics Education and Challenges of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has continued to experience several challenges in our contemporary time. The challenges that confront promotion of sustainable development via Home Economics Education include; gender issues, unchallenging assignments and Non-involvement of home economists in development programme and policies (Nomeh, 2015). Divisions created between sexes lead to emotional and psychological challenges that hinder home economists from full attainment of sustainable development. Home economists, especially ladies, are not given the opportunity to exhibit gained experiences in workplaces in some of the challenging fields. They are also not allowed or given the opportunities to be creative and self-confident for the benefit of society due to their sex.

Due to the constant changing of trends in Home Economics in fashion and designing, cooking, to mention but few, create hindrances in creativity that would lead to sustainable development among the home economists. These challenging tasks are not often given to them due to the misconception of the specialized area of the discipline. Most of the home economists are unwilling to be involved in home economics in development programmes and policies. This constitutes hindrances to sustainable development.

Linking Home Economics Education with Sustainable Development in Nigeria

There is a strong link between education and sustainable development. That correlation between education and sustainable development was

presented in the world conference held in 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden (UNCED, 1992). Home Economics as a field of education, is not an exception; it has possible approaches for bring about sustainable development through appropriate Home Economics curriculum.

There is no doubt that Home Economics Education promotes sustainable development by way of empowering students through capacity building in decision-making and problem-solving. Importantly, the discipline satisfies the fundamental needs of individuals, families and society at large by addressing their practical needs that are related to everyday life in line with creative approaches or skills (HEIA, 2010). This, of course, helps students to be exposed to sustainable norms and values through experiential learning and ethical consumerism that provide them with an opportunity to gain first-hand experiences in conserving natural and material resources, thus reducing their carbon footprint.

Audu and Abdulkadir (2009) argue that Home Economics Education helps individuals and families to improve their lives through providing: training for necessary manpower in entrepreneurship; training and imparting of necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically, and technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for national development of improved skills, capabilities, and utilization of workers employed in government and private sectors. The above aim of Home Economics is paramount for the realization of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Nomeh (2015) argues that the “link between home economics and sustainable development is manifested in their ability to combine changing domestic responsibilities and obligations with sustainable development. Home economics generally engages in self-employment as part of a household production system”. Pendergast (2006) notes that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) identified three key dimensions: environment; society and economy. Home Economics as a discipline or profession aligns perfectly with the above three dimensions of Education for Sustainable development. Home Economics Education

programmes at different levels of education can be critical to improving food security, eradicating poverty, and making progress in the quality of life, sustainable consumption, and the production of households and communities. All these are critical to achieving sustainable development in any country.

Sustainable development deals with improving the economy of the nation. In the contemporary Nigerian society, there is a high level of poverty that affects virtually every community. Home Economics Education as a tool is relevant for empowering people to eradicate the chronic poverty level in society through training and skill acquisition for entrepreneurship in the aspect of textiles and clothing. These entrepreneurship skills in clothing and textiles include the following: tailoring training services, knitting and crocheting, laundry and dry cleaning services, jewellery production, tie and dye production, batik production, production of handmade embroidery materials, toys production, among others. Other entrepreneurship skills that are relevant for poverty reduction or eradication include rental services, production of artificial/natural flowers and, soup making (shampoo, liquid soap), Cream and pomade making, interior decoration, hall and venues decorations for events, main Services, and so on.

Improving the lives of society is another fundamental focus of sustainable development that focuses on quality of life. There is no doubt that a lot of people living in the country are struggling to maintain a healthy balance diet as a result of poverty and food insecurity in the country. Home Economics Education is indispensable in this regards as it equips students or individuals to acquire skills in nutrition that will improve the lives of the citizens in every community: processed - flour-from different source like Yam, Cassava, Plantain, Coin (maize) among others; production of species and condiments; Production of jam and jellies, Ice cream, popcorn, yoghurt; snack production like cake, pies, buns, doughnuts; outdoor catering services; nutrition and dietetics; poultry, fish and other animal rearing, to mention but a few, can handle

the challenge of food insecurity, balance-diet as well as improve economy life of the citizens.

It is imperative to stress here that Home Economics Education aims at equipping young people and adults with sustainable skills, useful knowledge and good attitudes for work in chosen occupation and career opportunities. Incorporating sustainable development into an educational curriculum is integral and indispensable for the realisation of sustainable development in the country. This implies that teachers should be trained on how to teach students in a logical and comprehensive manner to achieve this goal. Provision of relevant instructional materials cannot be overemphasized.

It is not out of place to conclude that education for sustainable development is the education that is paramount for promoting the opportunities of every individual to obtain knowledge, values and skills which are necessary for the decision-making about the individual or collective activities to improve the quality of life at this moment, not causing the threats to the necessities of the next generations as basis for sustainable development.

Conclusion

This paper has established the fact that education generally is indispensable to development. Home Economics Education as an educational field, therefore, is an integral and indispensable tool that can facilitate sustainable development in Nigeria through effective teaching and learning. Home economics education exposes students and adults to the knowledge of technical and vocational training necessary for human development which is central for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. Home Economics is an effective tool for enhancing creativity and developing useful skills that will help students to be independent and self-reliant for achieving sustainable development in Nigerian contemporary society.

Recommendations

Home Economics Education is an integral and indispensable tool for the realization of sustainable development in any country. Based on the above findings of the study, the researcher has made the following recommendations:

1. The government should establish more vocational centres in the interior communities across the country to provide opportunities for those who cannot afford formal education. This will provide self-employment to people thereby, making the country to accelerate its sustainable development.
2. Government and Non-Governmental Organizations should provide soft loans to graduates of Home Economics to enable them to establish their own businesses.
3. Teachers should encourage creativity and originality in the students by encouraging practical exploration and use of the experimental method of teaching.
4. The Nigerian educationalists should provide relevant Education for Sustainable Development related training inputs for teachers and lecturers.
5. Education for Sustainable Development curriculum should be developed and implemented in all three levels of education in the country.

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