

HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION: A MULTIFACETED DISCIPLINE FOR REBUILDING ACADEMIC ETHICS, HUMAN INTEGRITY AND TRUST IN NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

Home economics education began as a modest human area of study. It has since developed to incorporate diverse disciplines of distinct dimensions. It cuts across several cultures, races, civics and traditions of diverse peoples of the globe. Home economics education connotes vocations like teaching and careers such as floristry. It incorporates, integrates and diffuses culinary and cuisine patterns of diverse people into formidably greater human and society benefits. It imbues the clothing habits of one race with others and infuses different lifestyles into different cultures. Home economics education prepares people for different types of jobs like teaching in primary and secondary schools, lecturing in tertiary institutions, managing of industries and running of consultancy services for small and multinational firms. A home economist is an ardent entrepreneur of unique and diverse description. Home economics education draws its cocoons for its multifaceted bearing from many related fields of study. This made it become a concatenation of many professions that intertwine multifarious vocations and careers that provide jobs in governments, politics and business for the populace. This work replicated results of different experts on integration of multiplicity of other related areas as a quintessence of home economics education. It establishes that integration of more related disciplines would further broaden the spectra of home economics education, widen the vistas of home economists and enhance rebuilding of Academic Ethics, Human Integrity and Trust in the Nigerian Educational System. It recommends extensive researches for further terse integration with such other similar related fields of study for more concerted global scholarship.

Key words: Multifaceted, inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional, multi-cultural-cum-cross-cultural, global scholarship.

Introduction

Home economics education began with the training of girls on how to nestle the young ones on their backs and serve as mothers to children when their real mothers were away. It has since developed into the stage it is being pursued today as a full-fledged discipline with ample professions, vocations and careers. So far, the present status and scope of home economics education is a glaring improvement and an eloquent good testimony to what the discipline used to be. It is also an indication of its solicited enviable heights in the future counting from the

overall development in science and technology in the present day world as well as its inter-relationships with numerous other related disciplines.

As a multifaceted discipline in the contemporary era, home economics education has evolved into inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional and multi-cultural-cum-cross-cultural in outlook. It is here that this research anchors its focus of denoting home economics education as a multifaceted discipline which generates employments of varied descriptions for emancipation of the individuals, families and the societies required to imbue sound academic ethics and high human integrity necessary for rebuilding trust in the educational system.

Home Economics Education and its Appurtenances

Home economics education is today a broad field of knowledge and service concerned with all aspects of individual, family and society life. It is a diversified field of study involving education and research in many different areas such as child psychology and development, family relationships, consumer economics, food and nutrition, housing and furnishing, home management and clothing and textiles. Home economics education is a professional field of study which provides training for better home, family living and society well being as well as for a wider variety of positions in governments like teaching, social services, businesses and researches (Encyclopedia Americana, 1996).

Home economics education is a unique discipline which requires the integration of knowledge drawn from both the basic physical sciences, biological sciences and the basic social sciences to cope with innumerable human and society needs. In its most comprehensive sense, home economics education studies the laws, conditions, principles and ideas which are concerned on one hand with man's immediate physical environment and on the other hand with his nature as a biological and social being (FME., 1985).

Home economics education is an inter-disciplinary profession. It connotes biology, chemistry, mathematics, political science, biochemistry, sociology, philosophy, arts, economics, physics and psychology (Nwabuona, 2013). It is a multi-disciplinary area of study which incorporates studies in wild life, aquarium, microbiology, health or human science, sanitation, nutrition and dietetics, computer science, environment or community service and marketing; a multi-dimensional course which studies child psychology and development, home management, clothing and textiles, and food and nutrition. Home economics education is a multi-cultural-cum-cross-cultural area of study which is imbued with succinct and elaborate training ethics required to impact obedience, respect, civics and culture in the citizenry for better society.

Home economics education is the study of the home: the cleaning, the cooking, the planning or budgeting and shopping, the washing and ironing, and how to plan for one's individual and family health and society well-being (Okoli, 1992). Emphasizing on this definition, the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) (1975) remarked that home economics education forms the bedrock for many professions like teaching, catering, institutional management, research, welfare, dress making and designing, nutrition and dietetics, interior decoration, consumer education and even extension works. Home economics education

recognizes the need for the competences of students in general education, human learning and professional etiquette.

Home economics education has a history of delivering human services to individuals, families and societies in many different settings. As a field of study and profession, it is concerned with improving the everyday life of humans. Its focus is on the interdependences and inter-relationships among the phenomena and processes in the physical, biological and socio-cultural environments that impinge on human wellbeing and society emancipation. Its approach is ecological – a continuous search for the harmonious economic adaptation of the mutually sustaining relationships that couple humans with their societies and environments (Lee & Dressel, 1963). The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) (1978) posits home economics education as a part of vocational education which focuses chiefly on preparation of family as well as training for paid jobs.

The objective of home making is to help girls (and boys) learn how to handle the routine works and problems of family living (Brown, 1997). The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) (1978) believes home economics education as a field of knowledge concerned with using and developing human, material and financial resources for the benefits of the individuals, families, institutions and the communities or societies now and in the future. This requires research and study of the related sciences, humanities and arts concerned with different aspects of family life and its inter-relationship with the physical, economic and social environment. Underlying home economics education profession is the belief that the everyday life of human beings can be improved upon and or enhanced through the practical application of science to the problems and opportunities which are encountered at the household, family and society levels.

The focus on the household, family and society ecosystem involves developing research and education programmes which demand analyses of the everyday operations of households and the development of alternative ways to improve living conditions and maintain viable society generally. It achieves this by considering how the processes of managing, that is, deciding and acting, are utilized in attaining crucial values while meeting the essential needs of the individual, family and the society, such as food, clothing, shelter, nurturance, affection and socialization (Nwikeh, 2000).

It is in consideration of these and many others that it becomes apposite to concretely and unequivocally accede that home economics education is a profession that exemplifies itself as a formidably learning forum which embodies attributes of sound academic ethics and human integrity necessary for rebuilding trust in educational system.

The Origin of Home Economics Education

The development of home economics followed its origin when in the early beginning of 1798 it was introduced the first time in elementary school in Boston with needlework as the first skill. There was a time lag of 87 years before cookery was introduced in public schools. At about the same time, adult education for domestic workers and wives was introduced too (International Encyclopedia of Higher Education, 1985).

In the middle of the west, the Land-Giant Institutions began to offer home economics at the college level in 1872. In each of the years beginning from 1899 and continuing until 1908, a

small group of pioneers in home economics met to exchange ideas and to formulate plans relative to the field of study. These conferences known as The Lake Placid Conferences and others of 1899 through 1908 ignited the formation of the American Home Economics Association (Nwabuona, 2000).

At the early conferences, concern was expressed by the pioneers that home economics education should be conceived as making a broad contribution to the educational programmes as physical, biological and social sciences. It was not until 1920 that such a view manifested to some extent in the home economics programme (American Home Economics Association (AHEA) (1975). Prior to this, the concern was largely for the skills of house-keeping. Many years elapsed before concepts now held were accepted and implemented. Instruction on home economics education developed out of a concern for the everyday living of people, and is concerned with activities related to the development of persons or individuals, family groups and the societies (Nwankwo, 2008).

Philosophy of Home Economics Education

A statement of philosophy of the discipline denotes that home economics education is a field of knowledge and service concerned primarily with strengthening individuals, families and the societies. Home economics education is engaged in educating the individuals for happy family living in the societies; in improving the services and goods used by individuals and families in the societies; in conducting researches to discover and meet the challenging changing needs of individuals and families in their societies; and in furthering community, national and world conditions that are favourable to family living (Henrietta in Nwabuona, 2000). The philosophy of home economics education is for the students to learn those skills that will help them to fill their roles as family members in the most satisfying manner for themselves, their families and their communities or societies. These skills include not only manual and routine operations, but also alert functioning of their minds to plan, to execute, to evaluate and to adjust the daily jobs in home maintenance and family relations (Hall & Paulocci in Nwikeh, 2000).

The philosophy of home economics education is to help the person to develop as an individual; acquire the skills for use and mastery of basic abilities; promote good, mental and physical health, and assist the individual acquire knowledge of appreciation and beauty of his environment or society. Tate in Ehumadu (2000) opined that home economics education philosophy concerns the family, helps one to develop values which give guideline and direction of life and improve society wellbeing, which is reminiscence of inculcating academic ethics and human integrity necessary for rebuilding trust in the educational system.

Home economics education philosophy attempts to define and systematize ideas, values and beliefs about nature of good life of people. It provides criteria and guidelines for what we consider desirable and undesirable to humanity. Home economics education philosophy is a synthesis of the physical, biological and social sciences, arts and humanities as they are applied for improvement of family living and society well-being as well as for emancipation of scholarly achievements.

Some Challenges of Home Economics Education

Home economics education is a relatively young profession. It is still encountering some teething difficulties. A profound problem is the rapidly changing functions of the family and the

society. Many of the traditional functions such as production of food and clothing have disappeared; the area of family relations and child care is one of the few that remains. As interest has shifted to the family within wider frames of reference, there has been a noticeable fragmentation in the profession. For example, the home economist who is a fashion coordinator, may feel she has little in common with the nutritionist who works with low-income families. Many home economists have lost sight of their basic responsibilities for helping individuals improve their homes, families and their societies generally.

From a humble beginning, home economics education has risen formidably to an important noble enviable profession. Drawing its cocoons from many other related areas of human learning, the discipline has not only developed as multifaceted, but has also become a concatenation of several professions connoting many vocations and careers through its multifarious approaches to boost human learning, emancipate national outlooks, and encourage sound global scholarship.

Home Economics Education as a Multifaceted Discipline

Home Economics Education as an Expanded Inter-Disciplinary Profession

In addition to the eleven previously formulated inter-disciplinary professions in home economics education, namely: biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, biochemistry, psychology, political science, economics, arts, philosophy and sociology, it has further widened its scope to incorporate nine new additional inter-disciplinary areas like law (rules and regulations), agricultural science, bacteriology, zoology, management, accounting, anthropology, history and geography (Ehumadu, 2019). A home economist uses some elements of these newly infused inter-disciplinary areas to further fortify her depth of knowledge and applies them to increase the propensity of the discipline for more human and society emancipation (Ehumadu, 2009).

Home Economics Education as a Multi-Disciplinary Profession

Home economics education is a multi-disciplinary profession. It incorporates elements of some other professions like wild life, aquarium, microbiology, health or human science, sanitation, nutrition and dietetics, computer science, environment and community services and marketing into its development spectra. Thus, a home economist builds on wild life and aquarium experiences to cope with people's ecological behaviour and food habits. She acquaints herself with people's history and geography in order to know how to cope with their behaviour, nutrition and diets and where and how to reach them to satisfy their yearnings and leisure. She attunes herself to the problems posed by microbes and bacteria so as to fashion healthy human health through certified good foods, clothing, sanitation and clean environment as well as being able to render congruent community services. A home economist should be a good marketer – she should be a conscious buyer and maintainer of goods and services through proper budgeting, purchases and uses of groceries to meaningfully, economically and adequately satisfy the yearnings of people through careful sourcing of different goods and services with minimum incomes for family needs (Ehumadu, 2019).

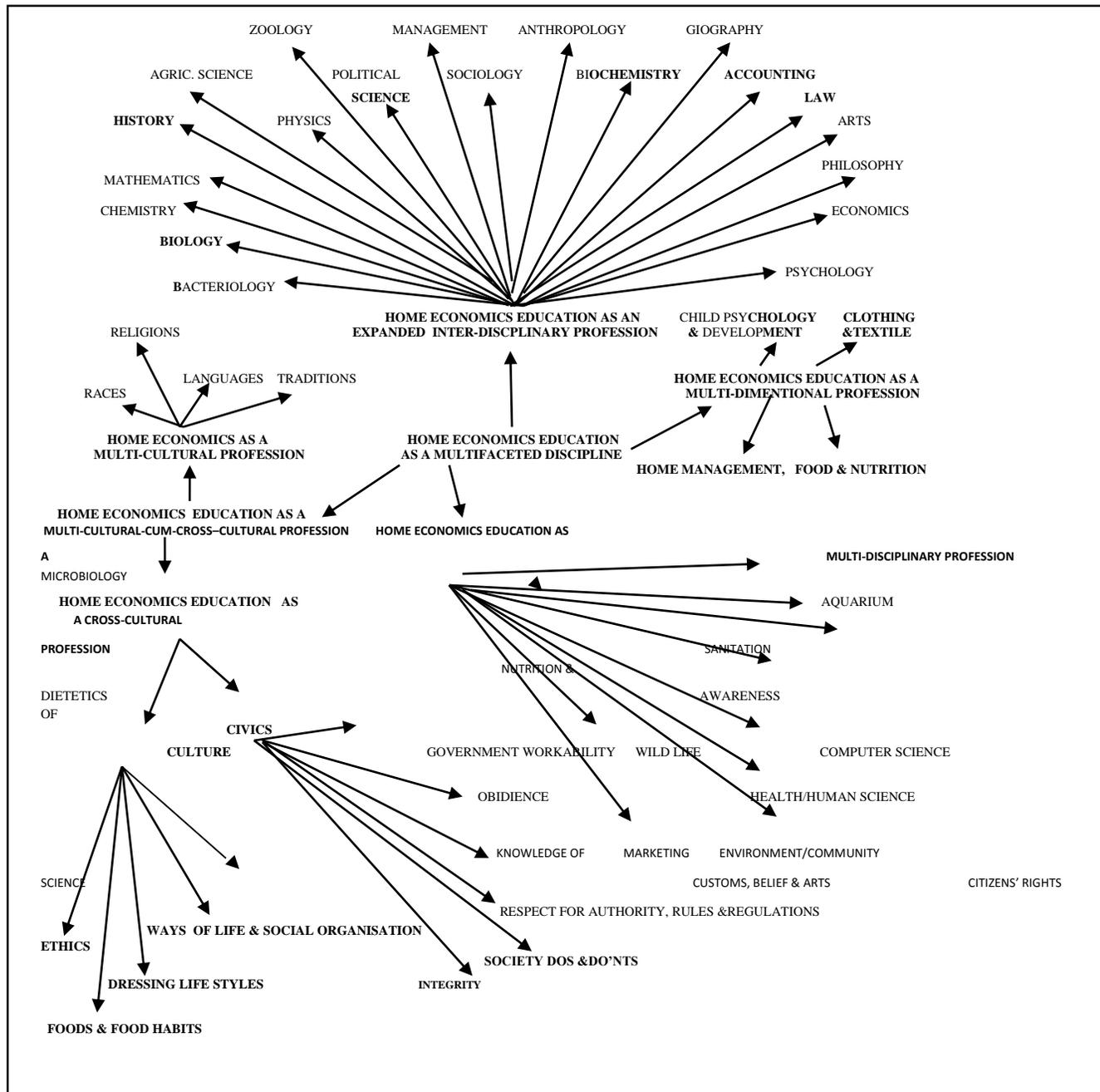


Fig.1: Home Economics Education as a Multifaceted Discipline (Ehumadu, R.I.C., 2020)

Home Economics Education as a Multi-Dimensional Profession for Rebuilding Trust in Nigerian Educational System

Having started from a modest stage of teaching girls how to nestle babies at their backs and taking care of home chores, home economics education has expanded enviably to broader spectra as a multi-dimensional profession incorporating areas like clothing and textiles, food and nutrition, child psychology and development, and home management. These additional areas have expanded to form enlarged dimensional disciplines in home economics education and have developed to encompass many vocations like dress making, tie-dye, food management and dietetics, hospitality and tourism and numerous others. They have also widened to incorporate some careers like floristry, teaching and many more (Ehumadu, 2009). All these provide employments for formally trained home economists, the amateurs and the entire citizenry for concerted emancipations of individuals, families and societies which is a necessary ingredient for development of sound academic ethics and human integrity needed for rebuilding trust in the educational system.

Home Economics Education as a Multi-Cultural-cum-Cross-Cultural Profession for Rebuilding Sound Academic Ethics and Integrity

Home economics education as a multi-cultural profession involves people of diverse races, religions, languages and traditions as distinct from their cross-cultural rivalries. Home economics education as a cross-cultural area of human learning deciphers civics from culture. The civics aspect connotes citizens' awareness of governments' workability, knowledge of their rights, respect, fear and continuity of society, obedience to rules and regulations, society dos and don'ts and integrity. Their cultural aspect is cohesion of customs, beliefs and arts of the people and their ways of life and social organization, dressing, lifestyles, foods and food habits and their ethics. In all, home economics education as a multi-cultural-cum-cross-cultural profession elucidates the norms, taboos, totems, castes, legendary, folktales of people and more. It cuts across family etiquette, society norms and respect for seniors and constituted authorities, obedience to rules and regulations and maintenance of law and order. Through its multi-cultural-cum-cross-cultural approaches, home economics education imbibes the knowledge of domestic and social norms of the society into the young and other categories of citizens. These help build a virile, stable, peace-reigning society apposite for human habitation and material development (Ehumadu, 2019) necessary for acquisition of sound academic ethics and integrity required for rebuilding trust in the educational system.

As is evident in figure 1, home economics education as a multifaceted discipline especially with cross-cultural approaches contains some elements of ethics and integrity in its culture and civics arms respectively. These elements are formidable academic ingredients for scholarly achievements for rebuilding trust in the educational system. Sometime, it was speculated that education had lost its glory. This was probably because of absence of ethics and integrity in the educated coupled with unemployment saga which made it difficult for graduates to be gainfully engaged after graduation thus making such teeming populace go hungry without jobs. They roamed the streets searching for non-existent white collar jobs. This awkward situation affected the psych of graduates, their personalities in the societies and damaged the interest of

their sponsors or parents who thought that their training would have made a difference in their whole family outlook.

With the embodiment of ethics and integrity and numerous other multifaceted attributes which enhance its multifarious entrepreneurial handiworks, home economics education has repositioned itself as a major contributor for regaining the speculated lost glory thought about yesteryears. Graduates of home economics education in the contemporary period can comfortably engage themselves in any of its numerous skills in the discipline as entrepreneurs and become employers of labour rather than being mere applicants or nuisance in the society and thus become apposite for rebuilding trust in the entire educational system especially in the discipline. With its multifaceted approaches to tackle the moral, social and academic needs and aspirations of the human race, home economics education repositions itself for greater service to humanity and singles itself out too as an ample employment generation profession that incontestably enhances human wellbeing and society emancipation which is required for developing and inculcating academic ethics and human integrity imperative for rebuilding trust in the educational system.

Some Distinct Nomenclatures of Home Economics Education

From its modest beginning in Boston and after a time lag of 87 years before cookery was introduced in public schools, and until 1872 when the Land-Giant Institution began to offer home economics education at the college level, small groups of pioneers met and exchanged ideas and formulated plans to move the field forward. These bodies and groups of experts distinctly gave many names to the profession. They variously at different times called it 'household economy', 'domestic economy', and 'domestic science.' In like sense in the contemporary era, many new nomenclatures have emerged. Such include 'human science', 'home science', 'human ecology', 'home economics', 'home economics hospitality and tourism', 'home economics education' and more. Today, some universities award Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in the field, while others award Bachelor of Science in Education (B.Sc.Ed.) degree in it and others. It is noteworthy to point out in concrete terms hitherto that the differences in nomenclatures portray just the propensity of the discipline to some other areas for further growth and development as well as specializations embedded in the profession and not for distinction (Ehumadu, 2019).

How Home Economics Education as a Multifaceted Discipline is used to Develop Academic Ethics

Home Economics Education as a Multifaceted Discipline integrates in its cross-cultural spectrum which embodies ethics required to develop sound academic awareness. Ethics per se are moral principles that control or influence a person's behaviour (Nwabuona, 2000). They are necessary ingredients for professional development. A Home Economist develops sound professional ethics through additional studies of customs, beliefs, arts, ways of life of people,

social organization, dressing lifestyles and people's foods and their food habits. This additional knowledge of skills and psychology of different people makes a home economist a multi-spectra guru.

How Home Economics Education as a Multifaceted Discipline is used to Develop Integrity

The civics aspect of the cross-cultural spectrum of home economics education as a multifaceted discipline inculcates into the home economist knowledge of government workability, obedience to distinct rules and norms of different people of diverse societies, and citizens' rights. Thus, home economists are groomed in the psychology and principles of respect for authority, rules and regulations, society dos and don'ts. It also inculcates norms of good integrity which is the quality of honesty and having strong moral principles in the individual.

How Home Economics Education as a Multifaceted Discipline is used to Develop Trust

Ethics as a system of moral principles or rules of behaviour and Integrity that is the state of wholesomeness and not divided are the bedrocks of Trust which is an embodiment of goodness, sincerity and honesty with the belief of being harmless and non-deceptive. Home Economics Education as a Multifaceted Discipline produces academics that will stand the tastes of times in the modern world academia using science and technology as standpoints (Nwikeh, 2000).

Conclusion

Home economics education is a life fulfilling discipline with many vocations and careers for growth and development of individuals, families and societies. Efforts exerted towards further expansion of its frontier and scope to further buttress its roles to mankind, society and educational advancement will not be an exercise in futility.

The need for constant reviews and integration of interactions of home economists in developing and developed nations with their counterpart experts globally is unarguably imperatively necessary for more diffusion of knowledge, experience and culture. The development of science and technology is continuing to widen the vistas of home economics education and very rapidly too with time. Such tempo should be encouraged and maintained. Specialists in other countries of the world would benefit greatly from international study of home economics education. With its current rate of multifaceted cohesive approaches encapsulating and diffusing education and cultures of various nations, the field would, in no distant time, become a conglomerate of professionals and thus would emerge, perhaps, the most global job provider-discipline of the century and best academic ethics and human integrity sanitizer for rebuilding trust in the educational system.

Suggestions

From the foregoing the following were suggested:

1. Every necessary effort should be made by governments, professionals and other stakeholders towards further broadening of home economics education horizons.
2. Appropriate tacitly must be ensured to widen frontier of knowledge in home economics in order develop contemporary scientific issues.
3. Home economics students should imbibe correct practices to emancipate man and the society by inculcating sound academic ethics and human integrity desirable for rebuilding trust in the overall educational system.
4. More researches should be intensified by home economics experts in order to find out more other courses and disciplines which can further be infused into home economics education.
5. Home economics programme should further be structured to render more satisfying services to humanity in order to improve academic ethics and human integrity required for rebuilding trust in the educational system.

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