

ENHANCING CREATIVITY IN HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper reviewed the concept of creativity in relation to home economics education and sustainable development. It reviewed ways of sustainable development in home economics education and hindrance encountered by Home Economists in reaching their goals in sustainable development. It proffered possible strategies of enhancing creativity in Home Economics for sustainable development. This paper submits that sustainable development is part of the goals of home economics and creativity enhances sustainable development in home economics.

Keywords: Creativity, Home economics and Sustainability.

Introduction

Home economics is the education for living. The study of home economics is related to home, family, community and nation. It is the area of study that provides the necessary knowledge, giving and assisting human beings to be able to attain a more self-reliant and fulfilled life (Ode, 2013). Home economics deals with all aspect of family living, drawing knowledge from many disciplines such as biology, physics, social science, humanities and arts, and unifying the knowledge drawn to teach people how to determine the needs of the individuals and families and become responsible and effective members of family and community through effective home making and gainful employment (Anyakoha, 1997). Home economics is a dynamic field of study which central focus is hinged on the improvement of the lives of everyone in the society. The course is self-reliance oriented (Ogbene, 1998). It is a vocational subject aimed at

helping people develop desirable social attitude and skills necessary for the world of work, as well as resourcefulness and ability to adapt to life's changing situation. Home economics can also be seen as the study of human and material forces affecting homes and families, and the utilization of the knowledge for the benefit of mankind. In the face of the changing situation of the economy, where unemployment is the order of the day, home economics helps one to develop the right skills for today's living. Anyakoha, (2002), noted that one of the greatest challenges of home economics is to determine those issues that pose various forms of challenges and threats to individuals, families and the society at large and address them appropriately. According to Adegbenfo (2012), it is the type of education needed for self-employment and national development. It has changed to include general reasoning, creative problem solving and behavioral skills as well as

positive cognition styles as against the narrow cognitive and occupational skills sought in more directed work environment. This need explains why the Nigerian government stipulated in the national policy of education, the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as a pre-requisite for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (FRN, 2004). Home economics as a vocational subject imperatively has solved the problem of unemployment by equipping its students with employable skills for self reliance through the vocational creative and entrepreneurship skills (Achor, 2012). The philosophy of Home economics is on the acquisition of knowledge and skills that can be applied for purposeful living. Home economics has several branches which are skill oriented. They include food and nutrition, clothing and textile, home management, child development and interior decoration. Under food and nutrition, there are different skill oriented businesses which include;

1. Professional nutrition consultancy in private practice.
2. Write books, newsletters, magazine, articles and blogs.
3. Implement nutrition programs for employee wellness.
4. Design nutrition software or nutrition education tools
5. Speak professionally on wellness and nutrition
6. Work with the media to provide nutrition education through mass media.
7. Public relations manager that handle nutrition information of companies that produce food products and act as a liaison between the company, press and general public.
8. Catering services, restaurant management, bakery, bread making, cake making and decoration. Fast food business.

9. Nutrition overseer for large facilities such as prisons, health care organization or co-operate cafeteria. These managers do the meal planning, oversee the cooking and distribution of the food and handle all incoming products.

Creativity in a general sense is the disposition to make and recognize valuable innovations. It manifests itself in the ability of the individual to create symbols of experience. Creativity in an individual is not only judged by the number of alternatives the individual can generate but also by the uniqueness of those alternatives. Fundamentally one who is creative exhibits such qualities as flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity or unpredictability, and the enjoyment of things hereto for unknown (Franklen, 2004). Creativity in home economics is the fundamental premises and genesis of entrepreneurial activity. Creativity is not an exclusive right possession of a chosen few. It is in all human beings at varying degrees. However training has been found to manifest creative abilities. Home economics inculcates in the individual creative skills. (Akunnaya, 2012). Creativity is an important characteristic of an entrepreneur. It is the capacity of persons to produce idea of any sort, which are essentially new or previously unknown to the producer (Ozioko, 2006). Creativity is the process of producing objects or ideas. It is a tool for progress in any family, community or society, promoting entrepreneurship through creativity. Creativity makes room for self -employment (skill acquisition) thereby reducing the rate of unemployment and abject poverty (Akunnanya, 2012).

To be creative, one must first decide to generate new ideas, analyze the ideas and sell the ideas to others. In other word, a person may have synthetic, analytical or practical skills but may not be able to apply the skills to problem solving that potentially involve creativity (Hara and Sternberg, 2001)

Although creativity is prompted by a problem, success depends on the willingness and ability to carry out the idea and express it in a manifest form. Creativity involves a complex process; research suggests that environmental conditions promote or suppress creativity. It has been identified that some environmental influences are essential for creative ideas. For example, an individual seeking or pursuing inspiration must feel a sense of freedom. The atmosphere must be conducive for exploration and some form of positive reinforcement in support of creative efforts must be forthcoming (Rehm, 2015). Creativity is positively enhanced when an administrator is open to ideas and allows experimentation. Creativity can be enhanced in the students by giving creative tasks which will call for creative production and opportunity to experiment without strict evaluation (Rehm, 2015). The exchange of information, resources and new ideas enhance and challenge creativity in home economics and in turn leads to sustainable development.

Sustainable Development

According to Nigerian environmental study action team (NEST) (1993), sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present, without compromising the ability to meet those of the future generation. It is the process through which the explanation of resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological developments and institutional changes are in harmony and enhance both current and the future potentials to meet human needs and aspiration (Okpetu & Nwankwo, 2002). Sustainable development can be defined as the economy, which depends on the stock of natural capital, human capital and technology which the future generation inherits from the present generation (Okpetu, et al 2002). The goal of sustainable development is lasting improvement in the quality of life and not just short term improvements that disappear rapidly at the end of the project cycle. Thus,

sustainable development is all about improving the quality of life without compromising the needs of the future generation.

Sustainable development is development that lasts. It is a concept that is very relevant to home economics (Okpetu et al 2002). 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. This in turn, improves economic independence, personal fulfillment and a better understanding of oneself. According to Okpetu et al (2002), sustainable development is geared towards improvement in the quality of life of the people through the application of practical and scientific skills.

Factors Hindering Sustainable Development

There are some factors that hinder the promotion of sustainable development in home economics. These include gender issues. Gender issues hinder home economists from full participation in sustainable development by creating divisions between sexes as a result of emotional and psychological attributes. But the fact is that the Home Economist will not be given the opportunity to exhibit these gained experiences in working in some of these challenging fields. They will also not be allowed or given the opportunities to be creative and self-confident for the benefit of the society due to their sex.

Unchallenging Assignments hinders creativity and sustainable development among the home economists because challenging tasks are not often given to them due to the misconception that the course is just sewing and cooking, and that home economics is a subject for low achievers.

Non-involvement of home economics in development programme and policies equally hinder the success of the programme.

Conclusion

Home Economics is a great tool for enhancing creativity and sustainable development. It has successfully created a way forward by making its graduates to develop skills that will help them to be independent and self-reliant thereby reducing the rate of unemployment.

Recommendations

1. There should be collaborations between institutions of learning, small and medium scale enterprises to enable students gain useful experience in home economics skill acquisition.
2. Teachers should encourage creativity and originality in the students by encouraging practical exploration and use of experimental method of teaching
3. Government should provide well equipped laboratories to enable students develop creative talents and encourage researches.

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