

**STRATEGIES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF HOME ECONOMICS  
EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF POLICE SECONDARY SCHOOL,  
ITAOGBOLU, ONDO STATE.**

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**Abstract**

Home Economics is a unique field of study that focuses on the improvement of the welfare of the individuals, families and nations striving to solve the most pressing problems of the present as well as the future. This study focused on the challenges and prospects in Home Economics Education. Investigation was on the strategies to improve teaching/learning process in Home Economics education in Police Secondary School, Itaogbolu, Ondo State. Three corresponding research questions and hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The research design was descriptive survey. The data was collected from both the Home Economics students and the teachers in the school. The population consisted of all the students offering Home Economics related subjects and the teachers. This consisted of five (5) teachers and one hundred and thirty one (131) students. All the teachers and students were used for the study. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean and t-test for two independent samples were used for data analysis. Based on the findings from the study, it was recommended that government should respond positively to the funding of Home Economics and provide good facilities and equipment for effective productivity among others

Home Economics is a unique field of studies that focuses on improvement of the welfare of the individuals, families and nations striving to solve the most pressing problems of the present as well as the future. It is a field that

deals with the economics and management of the Home and community. It is a field of formal study including such areas as, consumer education, interior design, clothing and textiles foods and nutrition, child development, money management, family relationship and the like. The mission of Home Economics is to respond to the problems of the individuals, families and the society as a whole. Nwankwo (2004) defined Home Economics as the study of laws, conditions, principles and deals which are concerned with man's immediate physical environment and his nature as a social being. Mbah (2003) described Home Economics as world eldest industry and certainly must always rank as one of the honourable and most rewarding occupation of all. IFHE (2004) asserted that Home Economics is both a body of theoretical knowledge, based on exact sciences and humanities and forms of practice, backed up by appropriate technologies.

Home Economics draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families and communities. The capacity to draw from such disciplinary diversity makes Home Economics an instrument for National development. The roots of the discipline stem back to its earliest association in 19<sup>th</sup> century with the teaching of manual training, the purpose of which was to train the mind, eye and hand co-ordination (Fleck,1980). There was also an intention for

future generations to live better than the present one. From these early beginnings, there emerge two predominant perceptions for the introduction of the Home Economics discipline;

- The emancipation/empowerment theory. The legitimization and documentation of a specialist body of knowledge enabling women to have more control over their lives. "The need and purpose for a new field of study in education that could help the home and family". (IFHE,2004)

- The reinforcement of the notion of a women's place is in the home, thus ensuring women continued to take primary responsibility for household and child-care tasks.

The development of Home Economics and the associate body of knowledge must be considered in the context of the life and times of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was one of the rapid change because of industrial revolution. These changes had significant impact on the social issues of family life, health education and welfare and altered the very fabric of family living (Mbah 2007). Home Economics emerged in response to the impact of these social issues on the health and well-being of home and family. When considering contemporary discussions of Home Economics and its role within the school curriculum today, it is important to understand that these two perceptions of the discipline still exist. The challenges for today's educators is to adopt trialectic thinking. This thinking accepts that neither perception is right or wrong. It retains a tension between the two opposing views while giving emergence to a new thinking and understanding. This is not a synthesis of the ideas, but a new view from which to gain available insights. The two emergent themes are that home Economics evolved in direct response to societal needs within a family framework, and at the basis of this evolution was the continued emphasis on enhancing the quality of life of individuals, families and communities. Although Home Economics is multi-disciplinary, it does not teach a skill for the sake of that skill, it

teaches for application, teaches for informed decision making in endless scenarios, it teaches evaluative and critical thinking skills, empowers individual no matter their context. (Pendergast, 2005 in Mbah 2005). In today's mobile global society, there is a need for a consistency of common language across recognized International framework of educational knowledge. The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) formalized an international understanding of Home Economics. "The study of household management for achieving the highest quality of life" (IFHE, 2004).

Home Economics has been described as being in transition and undergoing a shift to a contextual paradigm (McGregor, 1997). The paradigm can be expressed using other practical problem solving, human ecology, critical reflective, emancipatory and dialectic. Home Economics education is seen as being concerned with meeting the challenges of everyday living in a modern society. These challenges include establishing and maintaining effective relationships, juggling paid pleasures and being able to make numerous informed consumer choices. Home Economics Education provides the necessary balance in bringing together theoretical understandings and addressing practical everyday problems. It contributes to empowering people to become active and informed members of society with respect to both living independently and living in caring situation with other people. Students develop an understanding of the interdependence of their everyday living with that of their human beings and broader issues related to ecological sustainability (IFHE, 2004). Home Economics is concerned with the primary needs of the family, thereby creating a unity of purpose. According to Nwankwo (2004) the importance of Home Economics to the society is in the production of productive individuals who are the producers and

consumers in the society. The subject has the most professional knowledge to find the ways to realize human values in the society. According to Fleck (1980) “the world sharpens Home Economics and Home Economics contributes to the shaping of the world through its impact on millions of individuals and their families”. Through Home Economics people learn how to eat nutritious meals, use resources wisely and have healthy environment, thereby having a wealthy society. Home economics aims at improving the living conditions of the populace. It produces efficient homemakers and parents that bring up children who are useful citizens of the nation.

In summary, according to IFHE (2004) the unifying themes include;

- Home Economics is responsive to change
- Changing times require new ways of thinking inclusive in this one are the specialist thinking skills of critical and reflective thinking and metacognition.
- Pervasive themes of wellness, technology, global interdependence, human development, resources development /management.
- Individual family and community, self and society are identified as a common body of knowledge.
- Social, economic and environmental challenges and issues, and wholeness of the global family
- Over-arching themes include family, food and nutrition, food preparation, management and consumer choices.
- Specializations include food and nutrition future developments in the creation of

foods, clothing and textiles, shelter, economics and management, relationships and social leadership, wellness.

- Application of the knowledge to relevant and authentic contexts, inclusive of food preparation.

The identification of barriers and enablers to teaching /learning situation in Home Economics are:

- **Gender Maintenance:** Gender is described as being either male or female. Home Economics education over the years has been seen as women’s domain, not too prestigious with the demands of their husbands and children, for the fact that it is practical oriented, it has been accorded low status in the curriculum and devalued (Mbah, 2003). Home Economics is one of the avenues that certain aspects of life can be corrected through teaching. It is important that Home Economics is taught to the males for effective future family. Ovute (2004) in her work titled “males and female students’ perception of the roles of Home Economics Education noted that Home Economics Education is one of the courses which attracts the lowest enrolment of male students both In secondary and tertiary level of education it has been found that male students in Nigerian senior secondary schools seldom study Home economics and as such, the important knowledge and skills for better living at home and in the community are not imparted to the male students and lack of such knowledge could create much friction at home. It is important therefore that what is taught to the females should also be taught to the males for effective future family living.

- **Teacher Confidence and Professional Support:** Teachers need to gain confidence in their teaching skill and develop their teaching ability in general. Gaining self-confidence and

development of teaching ability are closely related, and working on either concern leads to improvement on the other. The more a teacher develops teaching ability, the more confident in teaching in the same way, the more confident a teacher becomes in teaching skills, the better prepared to move on to “the next level” that is to deepen in understanding of learning and teaching theories and try out new teaching practices. Most of the Home Economics teachers lack confidence and professional support. Lack of support for Economics teachers has led a to decline in teaching confidence.

- **Supply and Demand of Teachers:** Demand is defined as the number of available job positions offered for certain compensation. Supply is the number of qualified individuals both able and willing to offer their services in a particular line of work, depending on compensation. This issue of matching the demand and supply of Home Economics teachers is very important to the government. To ensure Home Economics has access to good programme has attracted the attention of some researchers (Mbah,2005). Several factors bordering on supply of teachers, facilities and finance have constrained implementation of well fashioned Home Economics programmes. Shortage of Home Economics teachers is common in most of the schools.

- **Clear Learning Pathways, Sustainability and perceptions:** Clear learning is a key strategy by which students extract meaning and understanding. The range and interconnectedness of environmental, social & economic issues, and the holistic insight, and clear learning are particularly relevant in the context of education for sustainability. However, deep learning can be inhibited if the existing interest or backgrounds of students have a strong disciplinary focus. There is wrong impression and ignorance by the society, and there is also apathy

against the subject. Hence, the notion that the subject is a mere waste of time and money to be included in the school curriculum. It is also believed to be a discipline for women or housewives alone or mediocre students who find it difficult to do well in other school subjects.

- **Relevance, Confidence and Enjoyment of Learning:** Relevance is a quality of furthering personal understanding and competence, linking instruction to learners’ experiences (Keller, 2003). To help learners gain self confidence, instructors need to consider their anxieties and provide instruction that fosters positive expectations for success and belief in competence, based upon the learners efforts and abilities (Keller 2003) Enjoyment is the ability for learners to feel satisfied with their accomplishment and supporting learners intrinsic enjoyment of the learning experience, providing rewards as incentive and building learners perception that are treated fairly (Keller, 2003). Children should be taught the knowledge, methods, processes and uses of Home Economics through first hand practical experiences and appropriate secondary sources such as books, photographs and videos. They are helped to develop their own understanding of Home Economics concepts by choosing the most appropriate type of enquiry to answer their own questions.

The Home Economics body of knowledge continues to be relevant and meaningful for students today and in the future. Within international and national contexts there is resurgence in Home Economics, as it is increasingly recognized as relevant to meeting current and future societal needs. Home Economics Education is vital that should enjoy renewed attention in the present era. This is because this unprecedented transition from industrial to knowledge-based culture. Despite

the importance attached to Home Economics Education however, the potentials are yet to be seen. This is noted in the low enrollment of students for external examination into Home Economics Education related subjects. Available evidence from West African Examination council's report of enrollments (Nwabah & Igbo 2010), indicated low enrollment trends in senior secondary certificate examination. Many students see Home Economics Education as tedious, abstract and stressful. The present student's attitude suggests that some things might have gone wrong with the subject. Hence the need to investigate the strategies that can be adopted to improve students' interest in Home Economics as a life career in police secondary school, Itaogbolu. The variables understudied were, mass media, teachers' methods of teaching and the facilities available.

The education of our children has always been emotive and when the mass media is added to the mix, volatility is inevitable (Moerdyk, 2012). Traditionally; the mass media and education have enjoyed a love-hate relationship. Mass media is a means of public communication reaching a large audience. This includes television, radio, advertising, movies, the internet, news papers, magazines and so forth. Mass media is a significant force in education. Researchers have all debated the roles of mass media to education. While options vary as to the extent and type of influence the mass media wields, all sides agree that mass media is a permanent part of modern culture. Mass media in education are radio, television, newspapers and film and the like. The mass media messages the sensory organs and stimulates them to respond actively. Hence the mass media is very important for classroom teaching as a part of the process of instruction. The sole objective is to improve the teaching-learning process with the use of various media. Therefore, the main purpose of mass media in education is to benefit more students

with fewer teachers or to obtain quality education (Khan, 2010).

The mass media provides information to the mass within a shorter time, takes a wide coverage of information regarding anything that is happening in any corner of the world. Brings the entire world to the individual or to the classroom.

- Easily reaches groups, allows repeated use, gives more reality, influences attitudes, shows cause and effect relationships and ultimately motivates the audience.

- Sends information to remote places and helps in distant learning.

- Helps in modification of attitudes, inculcation of desirable values and acquaintance with cultural heritage.

- Acts as an agency of social change.

- Useful for reinforcing group dynamics and interpersonal communication

- Makes ideas clear to children and helps them to acquire correct knowledge. They help in simplifying and in giving vividness to explanation.

- Makes the instruction concrete and stimulates interest and excites curiosity in things Education today, therefore has a far greater responsibility than it had ever before, it has to meet the demands of a dynamic world which changes its character every day. Contemporary education has to be more comprehensive and complete than it was ever before. The role of the various agencies of education like home, society, community and so on has consequently increased, so has the role of the mass media. The mass media is becoming more and more important in

individual's life. Mass media are technically called passive agencies of education. They influence the attitude and behaviour of the people indirectly.

Subsequently, one underappreciated determinant of academic achievement in Home Economics Education is good school facilities. The current literature indicates that one important mediating variable in determining students' achievement is the learning environment or the school's social climate (Ajayi, 2007) Facility conditions affect the climate of a school through such things as student morale and teacher commitment; when morale commitment, pride of place and enthusiasm are raised, the important work of teaching and learning is made more effective. As always, effective teaching and learning are embedded in the character of the interactions between teachers and their students. The "built environment" of school facilities support (or hinder) those interactions and through them the learning process. Ajayi (2007) stated that a well planned school plant will gear up expected outcomes of education that will facilitate good social, political and economic emancipation, effective teaching and learning and academic performance of students. It therefore can be said that the school plant is an essential aspect of educational planning because unless schools are well suited, buildings adequately provided much teaching and learning may not take place. Corroborating these, (Ajayi,2007) maintained that high levels of students academic performance may not be guaranteed where instructional space such as classrooms libraries, technical workshop and laboratories are lacking. Many researchers have shown the obvious relationship between school facilities and curriculum, which in turn affects affective teaching and learning. The impact of the physical environment in which teaching-learning takes place is very important. The reasons for this are not far-fetched and include:

- Improves students' performance in achievement tests,
- Improves attendance and reduces dropout rate,
- Improves students' attitude to learning,
- Increases retention rate,
- Boosts teaching effectiveness.

Okorie (1979), in his book "fundamentals of teaching practice, stressed that, the teacher can be instrumental to how a student reacts to a subject matter, in other words, the teacher should be prepared, organize the subject and diagnose the students problems, prepare solutions to them and correct the confused students. Arouse the student's interests, motivate and challenge them to be able to evaluate the syllabus. Ovoh (1982), was of the view that the teachers are expected to be an expert in the methods of teaching and learning, he may exercise these methods in different ways in order to effect changes in behaviour of the students. His/her teaching thereby, should increase the students' knowledge and the national development. The problem turned to question is "what are the strategies that can improve students' interest In Home Economics Education?"

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the strategies that can be adopted to improve students' interest in Home Economics Education. Specifically, the study will;

- Find out how sufficient facilities and equipment can improve students' interest in Home Economics Education.

- Determine the extent to which teachers methods of teaching can improve students' interest in Home Economics.
  
- Find out how the mass media can improve students' interest in Home Economics Education

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were examined in the study;

1. How does a sufficient facility improve students' interest in Home Economics Education?
2. How do teachers' methods of teaching improve students' interest in Home Economics Education?
3. How does mass media improve students' interest in Home Economics Education?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significance level.

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship in the improvement of the students' interest in Home Economics and the facilities available

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship in the teachers' method of teaching and the improvement of the students interest in Home Economics Education.

**H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship in the improvement of the students interest in Home Economics and mass media

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The design adopted was descriptive survey. The design enabled the respondents to

identify the strategies to improve students' interest in Home Economics Education through questionnaire.

### **Population of the study**

The population comprised of five (5) Home Economics teachers and one hundred and thirty one (131) Senior Secondary School Students of Police Secondary School, Itaogbolu, Ondo State.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

All the five (5) teachers and one hundred and thirty one (131) students were used for the study.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used for the study was questionnaire. The questionnaire was In two sections.

**Section A:** Sought to obtain personal data of the students and teachers.

**Section B:** Comprised questions measuring the strategies for the improvement of Home Economics programme. The specific factors surveyed were the facilities available, teachers method of teaching and mass media. It was a five point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Rarely Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

The validity of the instrument was established through experts' judgments and modifications.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach to test the items. The calculated reliability coefficient was 0.83

**Method of Data Collection**

One hundred and thirty-six (136) questionnaire copies were administered to teachers of Home Economics. All the copies were retrieved for analysis.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive and inferential tools were used to analyze the data collected for the study. Mean was used to answer the research questions, while t-test for the mean of two independent groups was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship in the improvement of students interest in Home Economics and the facilities available. The computed result is as shown in table 1

**Table: t-test Analysis of Facilities on the Interest of the Students.**

Category	N	Mean	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	P-value
Availability of facilities	95	63.8	134			
Non-availability	41	58.2		2.67	2.306	P>0.05

The calculated t-value was 2.67 when compared with the critical t-value of 2.306 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the improvement of the student’s interest in Home Economics Education and availability of facilities in the school.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship in the teachers’ method of teaching and the improvement of the students’ interest in Home Economics. The result is in Table 2

**Table 2: t-test Analysis of Teachers’ Method of Teaching.**

Category	N	Mean	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	Decision
Teachers’ good method of teaching	104	79.8	134			
Teachers’ bad method of teaching	32	56.2		5.33	2.306	p>0.05

The calculated t-value was 5.33 when compared with the critical t. value of 2.306 at 0.05 confidence level, the calculated t-value was greater. The null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is significant difference in the teachers’ method of teaching and the improvement of the students’ interest in Home Economics Education.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship in the improvement of the students’ interest in Home Economics and the use of the mass media. The result is in Table 3.

**Table 3: the t-test Analysis of Mass Media**

Category	N	Mean	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	Decision
Mass media	90	78.2	134			
Non-mass media	46	57.8		9.6	2.306	p>0.05

The calculated t-value was 9.6 when compared with the critical t - value of 2.306 at 0.05 level of significance, the cal.t was greater so the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is significant difference in the use of mass media and the improvement of the students’ interest in Home Economics.

**Discussion**

The findings from hypothesis one revealed that there is significant difference in the improvement of the students’ interest in Home Economics Education and availability of facilities in school. This is in agreement with the work of Ajayi (2007) which stated that a well planned school plant will gear up expected outcomes of education that will facilitate good social, political and learning and economic emancipation, effective teaching and learning and academic performance of students. School plant is an essential aspect of educational planning because unless schools are well suited, adequately constructed and equipment provided much teaching and learning may not take place.

The second finding also revealed that there is significant difference in the teachers’



methods of teaching and the improvement of the students' interest in Home Economics.

This is in agreement with Okorie (1979) that stressed that, the teacher can be instrumental to how a student reacts to a subject matter. In other words, the teacher should be prepared, organize the subject and diagnose the students' problems, prepare solutions to them and correct the confused students. Arouse the student interests, motivate and challenge them to be able to improve the teaching and learning process so also Ovoh (1982) was of the view that the teacher is expected to be an expert in the method of teaching and learning, he may exercise these in different ways in order to effect changes in behaviour of the students. His/her teaching thereby, should increase the students' knowledge and the national development.

The third finding revealed that there is significant difference in mass media and the improvement of the students' interest in Home Economics Education. This is in agreement with the work of Moerdyk (2012) that, mass media have proved to help in classifying concepts, stimulating group and individual activities, developing a collective critical awareness, changing attitudes, imposing a new structure or organization on certain subjects, and encouraging originality and creativeness. Teachers have to be trained and oriented in the adequate use and maintenance of the materials.

### **Conclusion**

It was apparent that mass media, the teachers' method of teaching and the facilities available in the school improve the students' interest in Home Economics Education.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Government should provide facilities and equipment for effective productivity

2. Home Economics is a dynamic field. It is therefore necessary for Home Economics teachers to strive to up-date their knowledge through conferences and workshops.
3. Home Economics Education should be widely propagated through the mass media.
4. Home Economics Education teachers should adopt appropriate method of teaching to improve teaching/learning process.
5. The government should provide professional teachers with the sense of commitment and dedication to the teaching supervision of the department to know their problems and prospects. This will make the administrator in the school to provide the necessary facilities to improve and enhance the smooth running of school subjects.
6. There should be thorough supervision of the departments to know their problems and prospects. This will make the administrator in the school to provide the necessary facilities to improve and enhance the smooth running of the subject.
7. The society should be well informed about the lot of Home Economics Education to remove the bad notion about the subject. This can be done through exhibition of the works of the students.

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