

APPRAISAL OF COMPETENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS BY HOME-ECONOMICS EDUCATORS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Competencies and effectiveness by Home-Economics educators is of utmost importance in any educational programme. The benefits associated with competencies are many. The paper attempts to examine the competencies required by home-economics educators in a bid to ensure national growth. The competencies and the proficiency required of home-economics educators were discussed include the most efficient method, intelligence practical and technical know-how and willingness to learn. The paper discussed implications for home-economics educators, the students and the governments at all level. The paper concluded that in the 21st century, regular, proper and systematic competencies are necessary in sustaining Home-Economics educators and investment opportunities of the Nigeria.

Home-Economics education programme requires a systematic and dynamic process of competencies and effectiveness. This is because competencies and effectiveness are the integral part of the teaching and learning process; it is a process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved. This means that the objectives to be achieved should have been identified earlier.

To be relevant in the day to day changes and development in the world of technology, Home-Economics educators should be versatile in their field of specialization and arm themselves with the most proficient weapons, like having the most current information in their

field (at both local and international scenario), at the tip of their fingers and willingness to practically demonstrate their technical know-how when given the slightest opportunity to do so. Moreso, for home-economics educators to be competent and effective, they need to play a pioneer role in an attempt towards ensuring national growth, Home-Economics Educators are also expected to be precious in their chosen field. They should be receptive to instruction, willing to learn and ready to be corrected. They must be emotionally stable.

One way of measuring teacher effectiveness and competent is by looking at the performance of the students. The issue of poor performance of students especially in Home-Economics subject has been blamed on teachers inadequacies in classroom presentation that Home-Economics teachers may be showing negative attitude to their work have been suggested by Olamusi (1984). The prevalent method of Home-Economics instruction has been described as mainly expository with very little involvement of students in experimentation (Shaibu, 1999 and Ajeyalemi 1993).

Fafunwa (1977) stated that of all the educational problems faced by African countries, none was a persisting and agonizing as the one relating to the training of the competent and effective teacher (a) How competent and/or effective are the Home-Economics teachers produced from our training institutions? (b) A review of literature undertaken in this paper shows that the performances of most Home-Economics teachers are below expectation. Many reasons are responsible for this. The first is the problem of

definition of what constitute teacher effectiveness and teaching effectiveness. That is, how do we measure effectiveness generally? And what yardstick should be used to measure what we are to measure.

To curious hard-working curriculum development scholars and students, issues raised so far are very critical that the situation should not be allowed indefinitely considering the huge amount of resource (human and material) spent on education annually by our various governments (Federal, State and Local). More importantly, parents need to know how the school has helped to improve the lives of their children by cultivating in them the spirit of self-dependence and maturity.

Alkin (2004) argued that all the technologically advanced countries were able to achieve greatness because of the high premium (value) that such countries placed on teaching profession. If Nigeria as a country would witness economic and technological breakthrough, the teaching profession and home-economics education should be accorded the first priority in everything. This is because there is no nation that can rise above its educational system and the shortest way to destroy a nation is to deprive her of education-light, illumination, enlightenment, progress among others and to plunge a nation into darkness, regression, poverty misery and other vices.

In other words, if our Home-Economics educators are competent, efficient, proficient, diligent and industrious in their fields of specialization, their competencies and versatility will go a long way in accentuating and setting the pace for national growth, economic buoyancy technological revolution. In other words, Fadoju (2009), observed that Home-Economics Education is instrumental to buoyant, modern economy as it requires for rapid growth and development, skilled manpower in operating

catering and in-door and out doors service. Garment construction or manufacture, fashion designing and tailoring.

Day care centre and nursery and secondary schools and merchandizing in household equipment and boutique.

The paper discussed the following

- a. Evaluation of school of Home-Economics Education
- b. Teacher and teaching effectiveness and how it can be measured
- c. Concept of competencies
- d. Home-Economics Educator
- e. The question of how to evaluate teacher's teaching effectiveness in Home-Economics education will go a long time continues to be a subject for debate among educators and administrators.

Definition of Terms

- Competencies: Our emphasis is on the ability, power, the effectiveness, the proficiency, skill, knowledge and technical know-how which the Home-Economics Educators are supposed to possess (acquire) in the country's bid towards ensuring national growth and development.
- Home-Economics Educators: Are defined as those lectures, instructors and technologists at the various school of school, of vocational education of either in secondary school or in tertiary institution or colleges of education.
- Evaluation: Evaluation means appraising or judging persons, organization of things in relation to stated objectives, standard or criteria. There are also different approaches to evaluation. Depending upon the targets requiring improvement. Presently, needs,

assessment or formative evaluation, facilities assessment summative evaluation or course evaluations are most common. In education, especially in curriculum development, the main decision points to which improvement efforts are directed are goals, techniques structure policies and procedures, resources, perception/attitudes/feelings about the above, but including values and norms. The noble question now is, to what extent are Home-Economics teachers able to use appropriate Home-economics classroom teaching. This, however, is the focus of our next discussion which it is believed would enable us appraise the issues more pragmatically and realistically.

Home Economics Education Techniques and Teacher Effectiveness

Home-Economics is a field of knowledge which is concerned with management of resources to meet our needs. It is an application of science and arts towards achieving happy and healthy homes (Anderson and Nikols, 2004). It is therefore teaches us how to utilize our available resources both human and materials resource to achieve our objectives and to apply their expertise to the problems issues that affect the human life of the day. It is primarily concerned with the welfare of individuals, the family and the society as a whole, the survival of the family and the society is certainly concern for Home-Economics and its practitioners.

Home-Economics education teachers is dedicated to the task of helping individuals learn better behaviour pattern and skills that will enable them fulfill effectively their roles as family members. It is also aim at helping people identify and develop certain fundamental competences that will be effective in personal

and family living regardless of the particular circumstances of the individual of the family.

Presently there is a yawning gap between the ideas of curriculum developers/innovators and their practical implementation in the classroom. Abdullahi (1993) for instance, in home economics programme, knowledge, skills and practical are introduced through learning and teaching process in terms of clothing and textiles, baking and interior decoration etc. By exposing students to these three activities, students will acquire a greater understanding, insight, satisfaction and enjoyment it provides for the learners. In teaching these skills, there is need for competencies and effectiveness in the preparation of Home-Economics teachers. Home-Economics teachers should not only be armed with theoretical knowledge but with practical knowledge. That is to say that a Home-Economics teachers should be knowledgeable and have ability to effect positive transfer of learning to the students through the use of effective method, materials, language and the degree of flexibility he can allow.

Students achievements are known to be dependent upon many competing factors, notable among which are teacher characteristics including his knowledge of subject matter. (Ivoni, 1991).

The nature of competence and quality of Home-Economics teachers show that:

- a. Teachers who are competent make the subject matter interesting.
- b. Teachers who posses adequate understanding of the subject matter are highly valued by their students.
- c. Teachers who are competent is expected to have the knowledge of the subject content.
- d. Teacher must have interesting attitude towards Home-Economics programme.
- e. Teachers of Home-Economics is expected to always guide his students to solve problem in their areas of difficulties.

- f. Home-Economics teachers should make his teaching enjoyable by using variety of instructional materials, play way drama method. Pupils enjoy a sense of belonging through active participation.
- g. Home-economics teachers should teach simple concept to more difficult concept. Idea must be developed by using elementary ideas as foundation home-economics is abstract in nature, any topic should be taught proceeding from simple to complex or from known to unknown in order to enhance understanding of the subject.
- h. Constant evaluation in home-economics education is necessary as a measure of improving student achievement and teacher effectiveness. All these would assist the Home-Economics teacher to be aware of evaluation efforts and their findings and when put into effective use is capable of assisting students in achieving better results in Home-Economics Education.

The Teacher's Competencies, Knowledge of Students Characteristics and Teacher Effectiveness

The learners as one of the major determinants of the curriculum are very significant in the implementation of the curriculum. For the curriculum to be effectively implemented, certain questions must be raised about the characteristics of the learner. Some examples of the questions include: what are the learners intellectual capacities? Does he have any previous learning experiences? What is his socio-economic background like? etc.

Answer to these and others will determine to what extent any given curriculum shall be successfully implemented and evaluated. But again, the noble question is, how effective are Home-Economics teachers in this regard? Experiences cum casual observation have shown

that most Home-Economics teachers are largely ineffective due to the effect of the conditions under which they are working. Earlier on, it was remarked that there is a yawning gap between the ideas of programme innovators and their practical implementation in the classrooms. This again brings us back to the competence of the teacher, the expected leader in classroom practices. It suggests that no matter what the situation is, what the students learn or fail to learn in home-economics education is largely dependent on their teacher. Therefore, the professional background and performance of the teacher would necessarily determine the quality of performance of students in all subjects. What we can do therefore, is to adopt measures that are aimed at raising the teaching competence of our Home-Economics Education teachers and thus ensure their effectiveness for progress.

Measures for Raising Teacher Competencies and Effectiveness in Home-Economics Education

The following sterling qualities amongst others are expected of Home-Economics Educators in a bid to ensure teacher effectiveness for natural growth.

- i. Home Economics educators must be able to effectively improvise locally made materials in the pedagogy of their students. This is because there is the problem of inadequacy of textbooks in this area of study in Nigeria. The inadequacy of textbooks is coupled with another problem irrelevance of the available texts to Nigeria's local conditions and needs. Hence, the need for local improvisation of materials in the pedagogy of the students.
- ii. Home Economics Educators must be precocious and display a high level of the mastery of their subject matter. By acting and relating and relating intelligent with

- professional colleagues in other areas of specialization, technical educators will go a long way to disprove the wrong and erroneous societal perception that Home-Economics education is meant for under achievers.
- iii. Apart from being intelligent, home-economics educators must be current with new changes, discoveries and inventions in their fields of specialization. They should be the first group of people to get the latest textbooks, journals, seminars papers, charts, cassettes in their field of specialization. By arming themselves with such current materials, home-economics educators would be able to effectively deliver the best services to their clients (students).
 - iv. To be current, there is need for information versatility on the part of home-economics educators. They should be able to competently and efficiently use the computer and ICT. It is important for them to be able to access information from the computer through the internet services. Relevant information could be downloaded and sent through the internet. By being abreast with up to date information, home-economics educators would be able to compete favourably with other professional colleagues in both local and international engagements.
 - v. Home-Economics Educators should be ready, willing to help and be friendly to students since most the work of home-economics education involve skill acquisition (psychomotor), it will require only people who are patient, loving, mature, painstaking, diligent conscientious to be able to efficiently deliver appropriate message to the students. A good educator will give room for individual differences among students. He will understand that there are high, average and low achievers among students. He will understand that there are high, average and low achievers among the students. The understanding of this individual difference will make him to be more friendly, painstaking and student centered.
 - vi. Home-Economics educators should be ready and prepared to learn. In fact, a good educator is supposed to be a student throughout his life time. He should be willing to be corrected and be shown the right way from time to time. Since no one is (an island) a repository of knowledge, he will be willing to learn from his students, his junior and senior colleagues and also learn from the mistakes of others. Moreover, he should be ready to subject himself to training and re-training and all other forms of in-service training geared towards his growth and development.
 - vii. In a bid to subject themselves to training and retraining, home-economics educators must be willing to carry out result-oriented researches. To keep themselves relevant on the job home-economics educators should be able to engage in research studies aimed at discovering new methods of doing things.
 - viii. Home-economics educators should be able to practically demonstrate their lessons with the most efficient technical know. They should be able to display their wealth of knowledge by practically taking their students through the whole lesson, demonstrate and display how to use some of the tools, carry out experiment, involving students in group works. For each topic, appropriate teaching

methodologies should be highlighted and as much as possible, improvisation using locally sourced materials should be used.

- ix. Home-Economics educators should be industrious and diligent. Where there is no input there will be no output. They should be hardworking and industrious.

- x. Apart from being industrious, they should be able to activate their latent entrepreneurship ability. Entrepreneurship ability is the in-built (intrinsic) ability that home-economics educators have for a better chance of success in self-employment. Entrepreneurship is the ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully.

Conclusion

Competencies of the Home-Economics education programme has to be a systematic process of obtaining information for judging effectiveness of the programme in relation to acceptable criteria or objectives. It can be rightly concluded that the level of competencies and proficiency required of Home-Economics educators aimed at ensuring national growth is high. Amongst other things, the competencies required of Home-Economics educators include: ability to improvise local materials, familiarity with current trends in their fields of specialization, being student friendly, approach and ability to engage in result-oriented researches and willingness to learn etc. However, the task of nation building should not be left in the hands of home-economics educators alone; it should be the pre-occupation of every citizen. In the 21st century, regular, proper and systematic competences, evaluation and effectiveness of home-economics education programme is absolutely necessary if the programme is to keep

abreast of innovations and happenings on the education sector.

Recommendations

The analysis undertaken in this paper indicates that reaching a conclusion on controversial subject like teacher competence and effectiveness should be approached with great caution. In the light of this, the following recommendations were proffered.

- a. Home-Economics Educators should demonstrate a high sense of loyalty, satisfaction and delight in their noble careers. This sense of satisfaction and delight in their jobs will serve as inner motivating factors for the home-economics educators to put in their very best in the discharge of their duties.

- b. The government should fully and generously finance researches, seminars, workshop, in-service training and other media of growth and development for home-economics educators. This will compensate for the neglect of this area in the past.

- c. In view of the dearth of teachers/instructors and textbooks in this area of study in Nigeria, the government should do everything possible to encourage and magnetize intelligent teachers/instructors into this area of study. Special allowances can be given to teachers/instructors in these areas such as free medical care, and transport allowance.

- d. Standard laboratories and workshop fully equipped should be built in all our educational institutions of learning. This will afford Home-Economics educators the opportunity to practically demonstrate their knowledge in the

- presence of their students. The students will also be able to see, handle, use and work with some of this equipment. This will make teaching and learning process to be practical than mere theoretical thing.
- e. Government should invest enough and adequate capital on home-economics education with a view to enhancing rapid technological development in the country.
- f. Students at the secondary schools and new intakes into tertiary institution should be rightly and wisely guided to choose courses where their talents are more conspicuous. This will make them to be their chosen fields especially if it is on vocational line with home-economics education.
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