

THE ROLE OF HOME ECONOMICS IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of Home Economics in Poverty Alleviation for National Development. It deals with measures presently adopted by Home Economists in alleviating poverty and the role that Home Economist should further play in poverty alleviation for National Development. Two research questions were answered. The sample was made up of 150 respondents who are Home Economics lecturers and final year students at the two Colleges of Education in Kaduna State. The findings revealed that seven measures were presently adopted while all the eight roles highlighted were roles Home Economists should play in poverty alleviation for National Development and five Recommendations were made.

Keywords: Home Economics, Poverty Alleviation, National Development, Family, Diversify.

1. Introduction

Home Economics is a field of study that is primarily concerned with strengthening family life and increasing productivity of individuals in the social economy. It synthesizes knowledge from arts and science based disciplines to improve manipulative skills, organizational skills and social skills. According to James (2003) Home Economics is a broad field of knowledge and services concerned with all phases of family life.

Lemchi (2001) also noted that Home Economics is a skill oriented subject which is capable of equipping the individuals with basic skills and knowledge that will help them to be self-reliant and thereby contribute to the social and economic development of the individual, the family and the nation at large. Some of the careers open to a Home Economics include designing clothes, clothing retailers, home services representative; food specialist, home economist in journalism, nutrition and dietetics, family and child development, catering advertising, magazines and public relation writing, television, publications, business and industry.

Home Economics is also a diversified field of knowledge that involves education and research in many areas including: food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, family life and Human Development, Household and Institutional resource management and community Health. Home Economics is a course that has a greater role to play in poverty alleviation.

Poverty is a global phenomenon ravaging most countries in Africa. poverty is a state where an individual or group cannot obtain the necessities of life. It is also a situation of low income or low purchasing power. Poverty may be described as the scarcity of human basic needs or the ability of an individual or society to acquire human basic needs (Olaitan, Ali, Onyemach and Christ 2000), in this context poverty can affect individual or group of community or nation.

When human and natural resources of a nation are not sufficiently developed, poverty becomes the order of the day and the economic scenes will be eluded with various problems to the extent that policy makers, practitioners and general public will be in a state of confusion. (Ajekamo 2008).

Nigeria has an estimated population of 155 million inhabitants believed to be living below international poverty line (Adekoya 2010). It is also estimated that two thirds of the country's 120 million people or 80 million are said to be poor and this is inspite of the fact that since independence Nigeria is said to have realized \$ 300 billion in oil and gas revenues and development aid. The causes of this state of poverty in the country had variously been traced to, among other factors.

- Corruption
- Bad governance
- Debt overhang and
- Unemployment (Akinola and Yusuf 2001).

According to Olaitan (1996) and Adekoya (2010) despite the efforts of successive government in Nigeria to tackle the issue of unemployment and scourge of poverty by different approaches the issue of wealth creation and poverty still remain elusive. Hence a greater number of Nigerians remain trapped in cycle of poverty up till now and many Nigerians are skill falling into this trap because of ignorance and lack of vocational training and skills.

Poverty reduction becomes the most difficult challenge facing the develop countries of the world, Nigeria in particular. Arogundade, Adebisi and Ogunro 2011). This is where Home Economics have to help families. Thus the aim of Home Economics in poverty

alleviation is to show how skillfully family can manage the meager family resources and generate more.

Home Economists should realize that they should be producers of goods and services, producers of saleable knowledge, attitudes in order to alleviate poverty. It is against this background that this paper seeks to evolve the roles that Home Economists should further play in poverty alleviation for national development.

2. Purpose

The major purpose of this study is to investigate the role of Home Economics in alleviation of poverty for national development. Specifically the study will determine:

- i. Measure presently adopted by Home Economists in poverty alleviation for national development.
- ii. Roles that Home Economists should further play in poverty alleviation for national development.

3. Research Question

1. What are the measures presently adopted by Home Economists in poverty alleviation for National Development.
2. What are the roles Home Economists should further play in poverty alleviation for National Development.

4. Research Design

A survey research design was adopted for the study. It sought information from Home Economics teachers in two Colleges of Education in Kaduna state.

5. Population and Sample of the Study

The population was made up of Home Economics lecturers, N.C.E, B.Ed students in colleges of Education in Kaduna State. Final year students of the two colleges of education were purposely selected for the study. The colleges are Federal College of Education Zaria

and College of Education Gidan Waya Kafanchan. A total of 150 respondents were purposively selected. These include 30 lecturers and 120 students at various levels of their study.

6. Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Home Economics. All the validators are lecturers in the Department of Vocational Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

7. Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was pilot tested on 20 respondents that did not form part of the sample. Cronbach Alpha Reliability index was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument on data obtained. The analyzed data yielded a coefficient of 0.92 which showed that the instrument was reliable.

8. Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument employed in this study was questionnaire. The questionnaire items were formulated based on the research questions. The instrument comprised two sections. Four point scale of Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2) and Strongly Disagreed was developed and used for gathering information from the respondents.

9. Data Collection and Analysis

The 150 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents. All the 150 copies of the questionnaire were completed and retrieved. Mean was used for data analysis and a mean of 2.5 was the cutoff point. Any question that scored 2.5 and above was considered as roles Home Economists presently adopt and the roles they should further play in poverty alleviation.

10. Findings

Research Question 1

The findings on research question 1 are summarized in table 1

Table 1: Mean rating of measures presently adopted by Home Economists in Poverty Alleviation for National Development.

S/No	Measures Presently Adopted for Poverty Alleviation	Mean	Remark
1.	Teach Adult members of the family saleable skills	3.4	Agreed
2.	Provide better education for family members	3.64	Agreed
3.	Unemployed adults should be provided with insurance on job and health	2.00	Disagreed
4.	Enlighten families on available loan opportunities	2.10	Disagreed
5.	Teach and encourage creativity	3.55	Agreed
6.	Enlighten families on current development in science and technology	2.41	Disagreed
7.	Teach attitudes, knowledge skills necessary for effective management of limited resources to meet desired goals.	3.65	Agreed
8.	Teach and prepare families to identify needs, make decisions and utilize resources to improve life	3.14	Agreed
9.	Promote garden and agricultural services	3.84	Agreed
10.	Promote adult education classes for employment	3.04	Agreed

Table 1 show that seven out of the ten items obtained a mean of 2.5 and above. While 3 items obtained a mean of less than 2.5. This reveals that seven out of the items were measures presently being adopted by Home Economists in poverty alleviation.

Table 2: Means rating of the Roles that Home Economists should further play in Poverty Alleviation for National Development

S/No	Measures Presently Adopted for Poverty Alleviation	Mean	Remark
1.	Enhance educating women folks on income generation.	3.56	Agree
2.	Enlightenment on computer savvy	3.87	Agree
3.	Enlightenment on how to raise fund for small scale business	3.95	Agree
4.	Encourage self-employment	3.67	Agree
5.	Promote use of locally available resources in production of goods and services	3.68	Agree

6.	Teach how to form formidable cooperative groups for establishment of small scale business	4.0	Agree
7.	Emphasize entrepreneurial and managerial skills more often	3.69	Agree
8.	Encourage combining farming with other occupation	4.24	Agree

Table 2 shows that all the eight items identified has mean of 2.5 and above. This means that each of the items was agreed on as the role Home Economist should further play in poverty Alleviation.

11. Discussion

From table 1 it is clear that Home economists are already playing some roles in poverty alleviation but they still have more roles to play in order to have sustainable economy and national development. The finding reveals that there is need to enhance teaching of saleable skills to women, enlighten family members: on loan opportunities, job and health insurance. These finding are in line with ode (1998) who observed that Home Economists should do more to help and raise standard of living by teaching knowledge and skills that will make people gainfully employed.

The study also reveals that the mean scores on roles that Home Economist should further play in poverty alleviation is above the cut off of 2.5 and above. The roles they should further play are enhancing the education of women on income generation, teach how to raise funds for small scale business, encourage self-employment, promote use of locally available resources, teach how to form co-operative for small scale business, teach computer skills, encourage entrepreneurial skills, and encourage combining farming with other occupations. This agrees with Lemchi (2001) who stated that Home Economics in Nigeria needs to be attuned to changes and innovations.

12. Conclusion.

From the results of the study it can be concluded that Home Economist are playing certain roles in poverty alleviation but they still need to do more. It is also clear that with the aid of assistance from government and NGOS, Home Economist will perform better. Further more computer education will enable students gain job skills.

13. Recommendation

1. Home Economist should encourage the involvement of families in their occupation alongside with farming.
2. Families should be exposed to the importance of being self-reliance and self-employed.
3. Home Economist and governments should encourage co-operative ventures between families as that will enable them get into small scale ventures together.
4. Non- governmental Agencies participate in institutions programs for poverty alleviation.
5. Government should encourage Home Economist to use their professional skills to teach communities on how to reduce poverty and empowered.

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