

ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETENCIES IN HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION AT TERTIARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study explored strategies to enhance entrepreneurship competencies in Home Economics education at the tertiary level. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the research focused on Home Economics students at Yaba College of Technology (UNN extension, part-time), Federal College of Education (Technical), and University of Lagos in Lagos State. The sample comprises 211 undergraduate students, with data collected through a structured questionnaire. The research instrument demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82. The analysis of the first hypothesis reveals a calculated X^2 value of 33.281, surpassing the critical X^2 value of 16.919, indicating a significant influence of the Home Economics program on the entrepreneurial skills of undergraduates. Likewise, the examination of the second hypothesis shows a calculated X^2 value of 43.599, exceeding the critical X^2 value of 21.026, signifying a significant influence of various strategies, including the enhancement of academic and experiential learning environments, in improving the entrepreneurship competencies of Home Economics undergraduates. The study therefore recommended that the Home Economics students should be exposed to more practical during the course of their studies so that entrepreneurial skills after graduation would be ascertained. With the use of modern technology by the students and lecturers, there would be great improvement in the application of vocational skills by the Home Economics graduates.

Keyword: *Acquisition, Innovation, Opportunities, Skills, Unemployment.*

Introduction

Home Economics stands as a multidisciplinary field, weaving together various capabilities that foster self-reliance and independent work. Rooted in both vocational and human sciences, it draws on diverse disciplines to promote optimal and sustainable living for

individuals, families, and society. Evolving beyond traditional home and family contexts, Home Economics in the 21st century addresses broader living conditions, recognizing the interconnectedness of choices and needs at multiple levels.

The Home Economics program is strategically designed to equip graduates with marketable skills, enabling economic self-sufficiency. This encompasses exposure to various vocational skill areas such as craftwork, apparel production, tailoring, fashion design, baking, and laundry. Ozioma (2021) highlights that these diverse fields offer employment opportunities, especially for graduates facing challenges in securing salaried positions.

However, Nigeria grapples with a significant gap between the demand for employment and the burgeoning working-age population. Despite the Home Economics program's intention to prepare graduates for flexible employment, including self-employment, unemployment rates in the country persistently rise. Oluwaseyi (2016) observes the increasing difficulty faced by Nigerian graduates in securing productive jobs. Current statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023) indicate alarming unemployment rates, with a call to address the associated social issues like crime.

Examining the National Policy on Education (2013), as cited by Okeke (2019), reveals that Home Economics, as part of tertiary-level Vocational Education, aims to prepare students not only for teaching but also for adaptable employment, including self-employment. Home Economics, being skill-based, offers opportunities for graduates to establish small businesses and hire others (Lemchi, 2015).

Entrepreneurial skills, crucial in this context, refer to the ability to create something valuable by investing time, effort, and assuming associated risks, ultimately reaping financial and personal benefits (Hisrich Peters, 2020). Anyakoha and Lemchi (2020) emphasize the need for the application of entrepreneurial skills in the tertiary Home Economics program, aligning them optimally with the needs of students and potential job opportunities.

In response to the challenges faced by graduates, especially in unemployment, the study aims to evaluate strategies for enhancing entrepreneurial skills within the Home Economics Education at the tertiary level. Recognizing the importance of practical experiences and competencies for real-world application, the research seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and the demands of the dynamic society.

Graduate Preparedness and Challenges

Graduates of Home Economics at the national tertiary level not only possess the ability to instruct Home Economics Education but also gain entrepreneurial skills essential for creating jobs and generating income. Despite the professional and academic credentials provided by tertiary-level Home Economics degrees, there exists a gap in preparing graduates for real-world applications. Training programs have often focused on imparting knowledge and skills without providing practical experiences relevant to specific disciplines, leading to a lack of empowerment and subsequent unemployment (Nwaokolo, 2019).

The essence of skills, defined by Stephen et al. (2016), lies in the quality of performance cultivated through training, practice, and experience, encompassing efficiency and economy in execution. Identifying challenges that hinder entrepreneurship skills acquisition in higher education, such as teachers' competency, absence of relevant textbooks, lack of facilities, inadequate funds, and a poor enterprise culture, becomes essential in addressing these impediments.

Strategies for Enhancing Entrepreneurship Knowledge

To address these challenges and promote entrepreneurship knowledge, attitudes, and skills in tertiary Home Economics programs, several strategies are proposed:

In-Service Training: Providing opportunities for in-service training for tertiary Home Economics teachers by industry senior staff workers enhances professional growth, creativity, and productivity (Adiotomre, 2015).

Innovation: Encouraging innovation within Home Economics education involves introducing Entrepreneurship Education that stimulates knowledge, skills, and attitudes, fostering creativity and the generation of new ideas (Lucke & Katz, 2015).

Research: Recognizing the dynamic nature of Home Economics, research becomes imperative to address challenges and evolve with the changing landscape. Keeping textbooks updated and teachers engaged in research, seminars, workshops, and conferences enhance their competencies (Anyakoha, 2020).

Improvement of Teaching Facilities and Techniques: Emphasizing the importance of teachers adopting new technologies and refining teaching methods enhances the adaptability of NCE Home Economics educators, ensuring their students are equipped to meet the demands of a dynamic society (Anyakoha, 2020).

Improved School/Industry Relationship: Fostering a robust relationship between colleges and industries is crucial for enhancing students' skill acquisition. Effective industrial attachments, accompanied by proper orientation, contribute to a positive rapport with the industry (Gula & Ewubare, 2017).

Advocacy: Advocating for Entrepreneurship Education involves pleading for a cause and speaking out forcefully to highlight the significance of entrepreneurship skills in creating self-employment opportunities for graduates (Obunadike, 2019).

The incapacity of graduates to generate jobs for themselves and others is often attributed to a lack of entrepreneurial skills. Home Economics, as a skill-based discipline, plays a pivotal role in equipping graduates with the capabilities needed for self-employment and meaningful contributions to the workforce. According to Charles and David (2017), graduates' incapacity to generate jobs for themselves and others may be ascribed to a lack of entrepreneurial skills and practice required for self-employment, as opposed to relying on the government or being job searchers. The current unemployment scenario and rising crime rate indicate that the school sector must do more to equip Home Economics graduates with entrepreneurship abilities.

As a component of Home Economics, Entrepreneurship Education is a skill-based area that is meant to provide its graduates with self-sufficiency and job abilities in apparel and textiles, food and nutrition, and home administration, among others (Burton, 2021).

Graduates of Home Economics at the university level in Nigeria may only be self-employed and marketable if they possess the required entrepreneurial skills and expertise for establishing a profitable profession and finding meaningful work. On the basis of this, the researcher set out to evaluate options for enhancing entrepreneurial skills in Home Economics Education at the tertiary level.

Purpose of the study

Generally, this study examines the strategies for improving entrepreneurship competencies in home economics education at tertiary level, specifically, the study seeks:

1. To determine entrepreneurial opportunities in Home Economics programme?
2. To determine the influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates.
3. Investigate the factors which affect the acquisition of entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates.
4. Determine the strategies for improving entrepreneurship competencies for Home Economics undergraduates.

Research Questions

1. What are the entrepreneurial opportunities in Home Economics programme?
2. What is the influence of Home Economics program on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates?
3. What are the factors that affect the acquisition of entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates?
4. What are the strategies for improving entrepreneurship competencies of Home Economics undergraduates?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of strategies, including the enhancement of academic and experiential learning environments on improving the entrepreneurship competencies of Home Economics undergraduates.

Methods

Research Design: The study employed a descriptive survey research design, chosen for its appropriateness in capturing the nuanced aspects of the study.

Population of the Study: The target population comprised all Home Economics students at Yaba College of Technology, Federal College of Education (Technical), and University of Lagos, all located in Lagos State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: A total of 211 undergraduate students participated in the study, with 300 students selected from each of Yaba College of Technology, Federal College of Education (Technical), and University of Lagos, respectively.

Instrumentation: Data collection utilized a structured questionnaire, divided into two sections. The first section focused on demographic and personal data, while the second section aligned with the study objectives. Responses were recorded on a 4-point rating scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher and a research assistant.

Validity of the Study: Face validity was ensured through assessment by three experts in home economics—one each from the University of Lagos, Yaba College of Technology, and Federal College of Education (Technical).

Reliability of the Instrument: To assess reliability, a pre-test involving 20 copies of the questionnaire was administered to students from Home Economics education but not from sampled respondents. The resulting Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.82 indicated the instrument's reliability.

Methods of Data Collection: The researcher with the help of two research assistants, visited each unit of home economics in the selected institutions to administer and collect the completed research instrument. There was 100% return of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis: Data analysis utilized frequency tables to address the research questions. Mean scores were employed, with a threshold set at 2.5. Scores at or above 2.5 were accepted, while those below 2.5 were rejected. Chi-Square (X^2) Analysis Statistical tool in SPSS v.23 facilitated the hypothesis testing.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the entrepreneurial opportunities in Home Economics programme?

Table 1: Mean Responses on the entrepreneurial opportunities in the Home Economics programme

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Me an	S. D	Decision
1.	Clothing and Textile	94	72	29	16	3.2	8.2	Accepted
2.	Home Garden Engagement	85	76	31	19	3.1	8.1	Accepted
3.	Interior decoration	96	79	28	13	3.1	8.3	Accepted
4.	Child Development and Care	92	80	18	21	3.2	8.2	Accepted
5.	Food and Nutrition	93	78	16	24	3.1	8.1	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

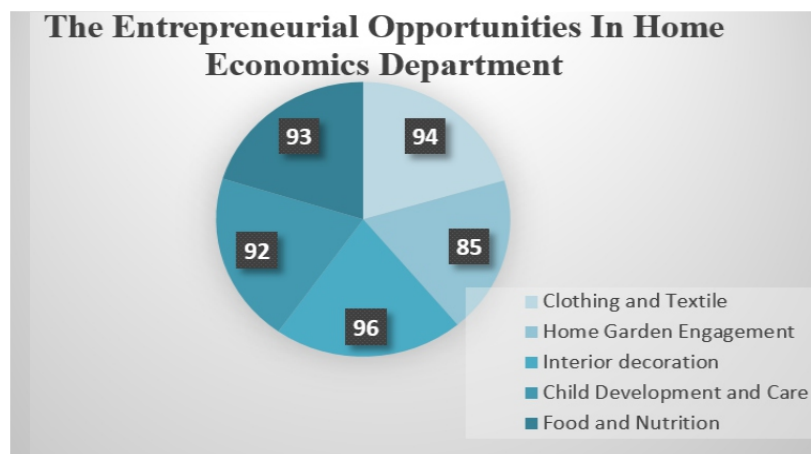


Figure 1: Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Home Economics Department

From the responses derived as described in table 1, on the entrepreneurial opportunities in the Home Economics programme, the table shows that all the items(item1-item5): stating; clothing and textile, home garden engagement, interior decoration, child development and care, and food and nutrition, all with mean score of 3.2, 3.1, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.1 were accepted. This indicates that respondents accepted the entrepreneurial opportunities in the Home Economics Department This is proven as the respective items (item1-item5) had mean scores of 2.50, and above.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	DECISION
1.	It builds students interest in entrepreneurship	90	70	27	20	3.1	8.0	Accepted
2.	It enables students discover acquire vocational skills	93	77	26	15	3.2	8.2	Accepted
3.	It enables students to explore new ventures	91	72	31	18	3.1	8.1	Accepted
4.	It enhances students' entrepreneurial prowess	99	68	23	21	3.2	8.2	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the responses derived as described in table 2, on the influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates, the table shows that all the items (item1-item4): stating; it builds students interest in entrepreneurship, it enables students discover acquire vocational skills, it enables students to explore new ventures, and it enhances students' entrepreneurial prowess, all with mean score of 3.1, 3.2, 3.1, and 3.2 were accepted. This indicates that respondents accepted the influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates. This is proven as the respective items (item1-item4) had mean scores of 2.50, and above.

Research Question 3: What are the factors that affect the acquisition of entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates?

Table 3: Mean Responses on the factors which affects the acquisition of entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S. D	Decision
1.	Inadequate practices by the students	88	76	28	19	3.1	8.2	Accepted
2.	Lack of adequate instructional materials	93	71	30	17	3.1	8.1	Accepted
3.	Inadequate availability of qualified lecturers	91	84	21	15	3.2	8.2	Accepted
4.	Students poor attitude	90	83	18	20	3.2	8.2	Accepted
5.	Lack of practical experience by the students	94	77	17	23	3.1	8.1	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the responses derived as described in table 3 on the factors which affects the acquisition of entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates, the table shows that all the items (item1-item5): stating; inadequate finance, lack of adequate instructional materials, inadequate availability of qualified lecturers, students poor attitude, and lack of practical experience by the students, all with mean score of 3.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.2, and 3.1 were accepted. This indicates that respondents accepted the factors which affects the acquisition of entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates. This is proven as the respective items (item1-item5) had mean scores of 2.50, and above.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies for improving entrepreneurship competencies of home economics undergraduates?

Table 4: Mean Responses on the strategies for improving entrepreneurship competencies of home economics undergraduates

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	DECISION
1	Ensuring the availability of competent, committed and experienced lecturers	93	100	16	02	3.4	5.4	Accepted
2	The adoption of appropriate teaching techniques by educators.	81	99	15	14	3.2	5.3	Accepted
3	Organizing excursion and internship for students	92	95	20	04	3.3	5.4	Accepted
4	Inviting industry managers to join in facilitating during practical classes	99	101	05	06	3.4	5.5	Accepted
5	Improving school facilities	76	89	23	21	3.1	5.2	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

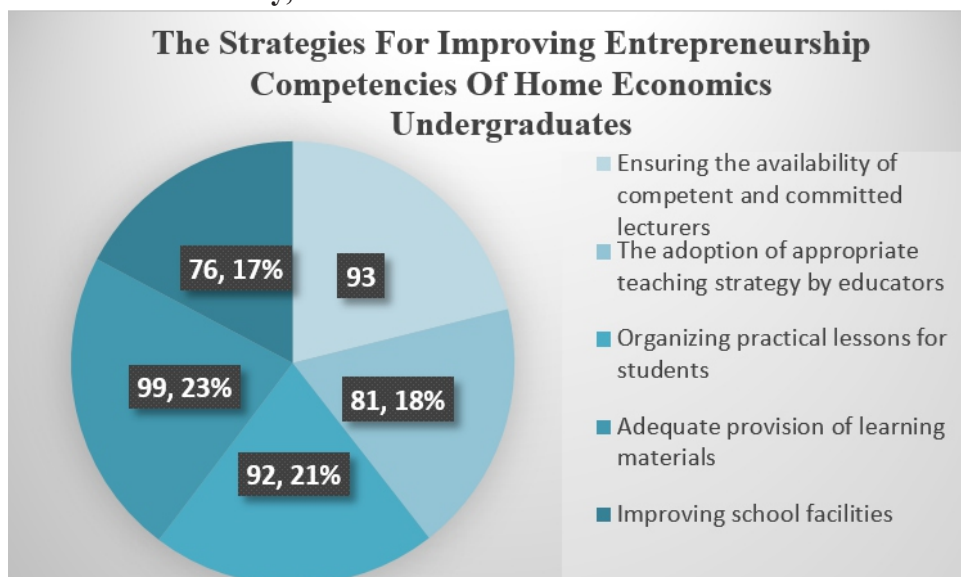


Figure 2: Strategies for Improving Entrepreneurship Competencies of Home Economics Undergraduates.

From the responses derived as described in table 4.9 on the strategies for improving entrepreneurship competencies of home economics undergraduates, the table shows that all the items(item1-item5): stating; ensuring the availability of competent and committed lecturers, the adoption of appropriate teaching strategy by educators, organizing practical lessons for students, adequate provision of learning materials, and improving school

facilities; all with mean score of 3.0, 3.0, 3.2, 3.2, and 3.1, were accepted. This indicate that respondents accepted the strategies for improving entrepreneurship competencies of home economics undergraduates. This is proven as the respective items (item1-item5) had mean scores of 2.50, and above.

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of strategies, including the enhancement of academic and experiential learning environments, on improving the entrepreneurship competencies of Home Economics undergraduates.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates.

Table 6: Chi-Square (X^2) Analysis on Home Economics Programme Influence on Entrepreneurial Skill of Undergraduates

N	Mean	SD	DF	Crit X^2	Calc X^2	Remarks
211	2.96	0.631	9	16.919	33.281	Significant

$P < 0.05$

From the table above, it can be observed that the calculated X^2 value of 33.281 is greater than the critical X^2 value of 16.919, hence the stated null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that there was a significant influence of Home Economics programme on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of strategies, including the enhancement of academic and experiential learning environments, on improving the entrepreneurship competencies of Home Economics undergraduates."

Table 7: Chi-Square (X^2) Analysis on Strategies Influence on Improving Entrepreneurship Competencies of Home Economics Undergraduates.

N	Mean	SD	DF	Crit X^2	Calc X^2	Remarks
211	3.28	0.841	9	16.919	43.599	Significant

$P < 0.05$

From the table above, it can be observed that the calculated X^2 value of 43.599 is greater than the critical X^2 value of 16.919, hence the stated null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that there was a significant influence of strategies, including the enhancement of academic and experiential learning environments, on improving the entrepreneurship competencies of Home Economics undergraduates.”

Discussion of Findings

The investigation unveiled a unanimous acknowledgment of entrepreneurial opportunities within the Home Economics program, with 100% of respondents expressing a positive view, as presented in Table 1. This resonates with Henderson's (2016) assertion that Home Economics encompasses diverse household management skills, ranging from budgeting to fashion merchandising.

Similarly, the study highlighted the profound influence of the Home Economics program on the entrepreneurial skills of undergraduates. It was observed to ignite students' interest in entrepreneurship, facilitate the discovery and acquisition of vocational skills, encourage exploration of new ventures, and enhance overall entrepreneurial prowess. Abusomwan (2021) underscored home economics program's emphasis on nurturing creative business ventures, aligning with Nwaokolo's (2020) findings on the provision of life management and employability skills.

Factors impeding the acquisition of entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates were identified, including inadequate finance, insufficient instructional materials, a shortage of qualified lecturers, negative student attitudes, and insufficient practical experience. These challenges align with Weidman's (2018) findings on the impact of inadequate funding and poor instructional effectiveness on students' ability to acquire entrepreneurial skills.

Conversely, strategies to enhance entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates were delineated, encompassing the importance of competent

and committed lecturers, effective teaching strategies, practical lessons, provision of learning materials, and improved school facilities. Lemchi and Anyakoha (2020) stressed the significance of specific objectives, organizational learning experiences, instructional methods, and facility provision for enhancing entrepreneurship competencies.

In the analysis of the first hypothesis, the calculated chi-square (X^2) value of 33.281 exceeded the critical (X^2) value of 16.919. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a substantial impact of the Home Economics program on the entrepreneurial skills of undergraduates.

Similarly, in the examination of the second hypothesis, the calculated (X^2) value of 43.599 surpassed the critical (X^2) value of 21.026. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting a significant influence of various strategies, including the enhancement of academic and experiential learning environments, in enhancing the entrepreneurship competencies of Home Economics undergraduates.

These findings show the importance of both the Home Economics program and strategic initiatives in shaping and improving the entrepreneurial skills of undergraduate students in the field.

Conclusions

Findings from this study revealed that;

- Home Economics programme has an influence on entrepreneurial skill of undergraduates and its influence includes: it builds students interest in entrepreneurship, it enables students discover acquire vocational skills, it enables students to explore new ventures, and it enhances students' entrepreneurial prowess
- The factors which affect the acquisition of entrepreneurship competencies among Home Economics undergraduates includes: inadequate finance, lack of adequate instructional materials, inadequate availability of qualified lecturers, students' poor attitude, and lack of practical experience by the students.
- Finally, the study revealed the strategies for improving entrepreneurship competencies of Home Economics undergraduates which states: ensuring the availability of competent and committed lecturers, the adoption of appropriate teaching strategy by educators, organizing practical lessons for students, adequate provision of learning materials, and improving school facilities.

Recommendations

Having critically examined the whole exercise of the research work and its findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Home Economics students stand to benefit significantly from increased practical work and demonstrations throughout their academic journey. By integrating modern technology into the learning process, both students and lecturers can elevate the application of vocational skills. This hands-on approach ensures that graduates are well-equipped with tangible entrepreneurial skills upon completion.
2. Home Economics teachers should adopt a holistic approach, covering all components in-depth. Aligning with the expected teaching strategies outlined in the education minimum standard is crucial. This ensures that students receive a thorough understanding of entrepreneurial activities, fostering a robust foundation for their future endeavors.
3. Given the current economic landscape in Nigeria, it is imperative to tailor Home Economics education to impart skills and competencies that promote self-reliance. Effective teaching and learning methodologies should be employed to enhance the practical application of these entrepreneurial skills in real-world scenarios.
4. Recognizing the significance of entrepreneurship, especially in Home Economics, government agencies at all levels and bodies like the Department for International Development (DFID) should play a pivotal role. Providing accessible loans for Home Economics graduates facilitate their journey into effective entrepreneurship. This financial support empowers them to establish and sustain their ventures.
5. To ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Home Economics entrepreneurial skills, there is a need for increased investment in facilities and funds. Government initiatives should prioritize the provision of resources that enhance the learning environment. This proactive approach contributes to the development of a robust curriculum and the cultivation of skilled and capable Home Economics graduates.

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